DISSENT

VIETNAM

MICHAEL HARRINGTON
STRATEGIES FOR OPPOSITION
The Draft—Tax Refusal—"Resistance"

IRVING HOWE
THE COLLAPSE OF A MYTH
U.S. "Presence" in Vietnam

WALTER GOLDSTEIN
THE SEMI-ASSENTING INTELLECTUALS

LIONEL ABEL
Important Nonsense:
Norman O. Brown

BEN SELIGMAN
The Poverty of Aging

DEBORAH MEIER
From a Harlem School

RICHARD ROBBINS
Negro Politics
in the South

JEREMY LARNER
A Happening Called
World War II

HENRY PACHTER
George Kennan:
Intellectual as Diplomat

BURTON FELDMAN
Anatomy of
Black Humor

THE McCARTHY CAMPAIGN
Comments by Martin Peretz, Joseph Clark, Albert Kramer

MARCH-APRIL 1968 $1

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

VICTORIA E. BONNELL and CHESTER W. HARTMAN were part of the original planning group for Vietnam Summer and participated actively in the Cambridge referendum campaign. Victoria Bonnell is a graduate student in government at Harvard. Chester Hartman is with the Joint Center for Urban Studies and teaches city planning at Harvard. His article "The Politics of Housing" appeared in our November–December 1967 issue . . .

ALEX GARBER contributed "A Call to End the Draft" to our September–October 1966 issue. He teaches sociology at Sacramento State College and is presently a visiting professor at the University of Portland. He is a member of the Socialist party. . . .

JEAN BLOCH-MICHEL, our Paris correspondent, a French writer and critic, is one of the editors of *Preuves*. . . .

DEBORAH MEIER has taught public school in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, and is now teaching in Harlem. She wrote "Report from Philadelphia: Head Start or Dead End?" for our September–October 1966 issue. Formerly an officer of NAACP and CORE in Chicago, she is presently on the board of LID and of WDL. . . .

BURTON FELDMAN, a critic and poet, teaches English at the University of Denver. His "Counterrevolution of Susan Sontag" appeared in our September–October 1967 issue. . . .

RUBY COHN, who teaches English at San Francisco State, has published widely on drama. . . .

JONATHAN EISEN is an editorial assistant with *Commonweal* and an editor of *California Dream*, to be published in the fall by Macmillan. . . .

RICHARD ROBBINS has contributed to DISSENT and other magazines. He is chairman of the Department of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. . . .

GEORGE ECKSTEIN, a frequent contributor, lives in New York and reports on the economic, social, and cultural U.S. scene for the *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte*, theoretical journal of the West German trade unions. . . .

WALTER GOLDSTEIN reviewed Sen. Fulbright's *Arrogance of Power* in our November–Decembre 1967 issue. He is an associate professor of political science at Brooklyn College and chairman of the foreign policy commission of ADA.

DISSENT issued March 1, 1968, is published bimonthly, January-February, March-April, May-June, July-August, September-October, November-December, by Dissent Publishing Corporation, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Subscriptions: $5.00 for one year; $8.00 for two years; $3.50 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add $1.00 mailing costs per year. All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. Single copy, $1.00. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to DISSENT. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Co., 225 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001.

© 1967, by Dissent Publishing Corporation, Permission to reprint any article must be obtained from the publishers. • Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. • Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. • Volume XV, Number 2 (Whole No. 63).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DISSENT

MARCH-APRIL 1968

DISSENT is a journal devoted to radical ideas and the values of socialism and democracy. It seeks to serve as a forum for writers devoted to these ideas and values, while also welcoming a wide variety of other opinions. Each writer speaks for himself; there is no effort made to exact editorial consensus or uniformity.

EDITOR: Irving Howe

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Joseph Buttinger, Lewis Coser, Alexander Erlich, Emanuel Geltman, Michael Harrington, Tom Kahn, Arnold Kaufman, Jeremy Larner, Norman Mailer, Henry Pachter, Stanley Plastrik, Jack Rader, Bernard Rosenberg, Bayard Rustin, Meyer Schapiro, Ben B. Seligman, David Spitz, Michael Walzer, Dennis Wrong

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:

Lionel Abel, Stanley Diamond, Erich Fromm, Paul Goodman, Murray Hausknecht, Paul Jacobs, Frank Marquart, Harold Rosenberg, Herman Singer, Stephan Thernstrom, Norman Thomas.

ASSISTANT EDITOR:

Edith Tarcov

OUR TWO-YEAR INDEX
1966–1967
Vols. XIII, XIV
will appear in our
MAY–JUNE ISSUE

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

THOUGHTS ON BLACK POWER —*by Kenneth B. Clark* 98
THE COLLAPSE OF A MYTH—*by Irving Howe* 99
THE DEDIJER CASE—*by M. P.* 102
CAMBRIDGE VOTES ON THE VIETNAM WAR —*by Victoria E. Bonnell and Chester W. Hartman* 103
"THE MATTER WITH CALIFORNIA" —*by Alex Garber* 106
ISRAEL NOW: A FEW QUESTIONS —*by Stanley Plastrik* 109
A LETTER FROM PARIS: THE DECLINE OF EUROPE?—*by Jean Bloch-Michel* 112

ARTICLES

A LITTLE SYMPOSIUM ON THE MCCARTHY CAMPAIGN—*by Martin Peretz, Joseph Clark, and Albert Kramer* 115
STRATEGIES FOR OPPOSITION: THE DRAFT – TAX REFUSAL – "RESISTANCE" —*by Michael Harrington* 119
FROM A HARLEM SCHOOL—*by Deborah Meier* 131
THE POVERTY OF AGING—*by Ben B. Seligman* 138
IMPORTANT NONSENSE: NORMAN O. BROWN —*by Lionel Abel* 147
ANATOMY OF BLACK HUMOR —*by Burton Feldman* 158
THE INTELLECTUAL AS DIPLOMAT: A CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF GEORGE F. KENNAN —*by Henry Pachter* 161
VIETNAM AND THE U.S. ECONOMY —*by H. Brand* 171

SCREEN AND STAGE

A HAPPENING CALLED WORLD WAR II —*by Jeremy Larner* 177
GIVING HANOI THE MAD AVE TREATMENT —*by Jonathan Eisen* 178
BLACK ACTORS OFF BROADWAY —*by Ruby Cohn* 179

BOOKS

CLIMBING JACOB'S LADDER,—*by Pat Watters and Reese Cleghorn* —*reviewed by Richard Robbins* 181
JOURNEY INTO THE WHIRLWIND, by Eugenia Semyonovna;
THIS WAY FOR THE GAS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, by Tadeusz Borowski —*reviewed by George Eckstein* 184
TO MOVE A NATION, by Roger Hilsman —*reviewed by Walter Goldstein* 186

LETTERS 190

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Kenneth B. Clark

Thoughts on Black Power

We print below several excerpts from a statement by Dr. Kenneth B. Clark, professor of psychology at the City University of New York and president of the Metropolitan Applied Research Center. His statement was first delivered as an address to a session of the American Jewish Congress and appeared in the Congress Bi-Weekly, *from which it is here reprinted with permission.*—ED.

PROBABLY THE MOST SIGNIFICANT and ominous development in the civil-rights movement during the past two years has been the rise of the black-power rhetoric and movement in certain segments of the Negro population. This movement, a contemporary version of the black nationalism of Marcus Garvey that dominated the Negro protest movement in the 1920's, also has its roots in the variety of forms and cults of Negro nationalists which have been recurrent through the Depression, the 1940's, and approached a climax in the activities of Malcolm X and the Black Muslims in the early 1960's.

Given the possibilities that the present version of the black-power nationalist movement can either be directed toward a constructive role in the struggle for racial justice in America or become a dangerous retrogressive force, it is essential that this movement be studied and understood with a clarity which rejects either sentimental acceptance or wishful underestimation. Probably the most important thing which must be understood about the present black-power movement is that it emerges out of the frustration and the despair of the masses of Negroes. It reflects the fact that the promises of racial progress inherent in the *Brown* decision of 1954 and the civil-rights legislation of 1964 and 1965 have not been fulfilled and certainly have not resulted in any observable changes in the predicament of the masses of Negroes in the South and in the Northern cities. . . .

In many respects, the black-power movement is chaotic and diversionary. It is difficult therefore to generalize about even those individuals and groups who describe themselves as black-power advocates. In spite of this fact, the various groups and individuals who characterize themselves in terms of the black-power slogan appear to have the following common characteristics:

(1) they place their emphasis upon the desirability of some form of racial separation as the way of obtaining racial justice in America;

(2) they assert some degree of rejection of whites and white participation in the civil-rights struggle;

(3) they express an increasing tendency to verbalize varying degrees of resentment against whites in general—varying from the extreme of overtly expressed antiwhite feelings to indications that whites in general have not really been serious in their involvement in the struggle for racial justice in America;

(4) they hold a romantic and chauvinistic belief that the Negro can obtain power and racial justice in America through his own efforts without regard to the extent of alienation or isolation from whites. Indeed, some of the black-power advocates assert explicitly or imply that the greater the extent of isolation and alienation of Negroes from whites in America, the greater the chances of their obtaining some form of undefined racial justice.

These common characteristics add up to the fact that the black-power movement is essentially a racist movement which basically rejects the goals of integration and somehow attempts to seek racial justice through an intensification

(Continued on page 192)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Irving Howe

The Collapse of a Myth

SURELY, THE TIME HAS COME to end the Vietnam War. Leave aside, for the moment, the urgent moral considerations. Leave aside, also, the incontestable political reasons. The point has been reached where even motives of what might be called national prudence ought to dictate a complete shift in policy.

These remarks are being written shortly after the Viet Cong offensive which in early February brought street fighting to the major cities of South Vietnam, and there is no way of knowing what the immediate military outcome will be. But one thing is clear:

The whole rationale of U.S. policy—that the cities are secure even if the countryside is not; that the military situation is improving even if "pacification" is slow; that the Viet Cong is gradually losing popular support—this whole rationale has been shown to be a deception, a self-deception, or both.

The Viet Cong has demonstrated, no doubt at great cost, that no "military solution" is foreseeable. It has demonstrated that the Saigon government is pitifully weak. It has demonstrated that, whether or not the majority of the population wants the Viet Cong, there is no firm majority opposed to it or even a militant minority eager to keep fighting against it. And it has demonstrated that if the U.S. persists in its present course, the only consequences (apart from a growing danger of a larger war) will be the physical destruction of Vietnam and the Vietnamese, as well as multiplying disasters at home.

Will ending this war mean acknowledging a certain national "humiliation"? So be it. There could be worse things for the American character—and one of them might be a "victory" achieved through the sheer weight of military power applied over the next ten years.

UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, the debate that has been going on within the peace movement about "negotiations vs. unilateral withdrawal" loses a good part of its meaning. Is it inconceivable that a power like the U.S. will simply pick up and leave? Then, let there be negotiations such as occurred in regard to Vietnam and Algeria shortly before the French withdrew. But if the idea of negotiations is put forward as a strategy for insuring "an American presence" in Vietnam for an indefinite period, it becomes little more than a justification, however intended, for prolonging the war.

Negotiations now have meaning only if undertaken with a recognition that they must lead to a rapid and complete withdrawal. Why so? Because the U.S. long ago exhausted its political capital in Vietnam; because a growing segment of the Vietnamese people seems clearly not to want us there; and because the U.S. has nothing to offer Vietnam except the prospect of endless warfare.

Will the alternative be a happy one? Almost certainly, not. Almost certainly, there will follow a slide into a Viet Cong dictatorship. But in politics, as in life, there are times when the choices are painful. Better peace with the probability of a Viet Cong take-over than a war which can only go on and on, without resolution, without reason, without honor.

•

IT IS HARD TO REMEMBER a time when the political situation in this country seemed more depressing than it does today—and I speak as one who lived through the rise of Nazism, the Moscow Trials, the Second World War, the McCarthy period. Not that all these events or periods weren't in many crucial ways worse than the current one. No; what makes the present crisis so hard to bear is that it does

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not seem so profoundly rooted in the course of modern history—so apparently "inevitable" —as the others. There are analysts of apocalypse, on both Right and Left, who do speak in terms of inevitability. But the truth is, I think, that the U.S. government has steadily had available political choices: just as it was apparently prepared to see Indonesia be taken over by the Communists without direct military intervention by U.S. troops, so at any number of points it could have drawn back from Vietnam, deciding, even in terms of its own ideological or class bias, that it was a mistake to deepen U.S. involvement. On this matter I have been impressed by something Conor Cruise O'Brien, an intellectual hero of the New Left, has said about American power:

> granted the existence and extension of this power, it can be used with greater or less responsibility and good sense. It is inevitable that this country should have predominant influence in the Caribbean; it is not inevitable that it should send its troops to the Dominican Republic. It is inevitable that this country should have influence in Asia; it is not inevitable that it should send its Army to fight there. . . . Capitalist governments, like others, can learn by their mistakes and are especially apt to learn to avoid doing what their adversaries tell them they must inevitably do.

Even if a settlement of the Vietnam War occurred on terms that many Americans regarded as unfavorable, it would not signify a world-wide triumph of totalitarianism or a threat to the national security of the United States. The great error of U.S. policy has, indeed, been to blow up the Vietnam issue beyond its intrinsic importance.

For those who want peace in the world, it is probably desirable that neither side win an *overwhelming* military victory. If the U.S. were defeated in Vietnam as France was, this could have the effect of encouraging new Maoist or Castroite adventures in other countries and thereby pose again the problem of interventionism. At home, it could well lead to a new phase of reaction, with retaliation against "traitors" and a backlash against critics. But no overwhelming military defeat for the U.S. seems likely. Suppose, for example, U.S. troops are decisively beaten at Khesanh; that would appear, superficially, as an equivalent to the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu. But in truth it would not be equivalent, for France was unable to recover from its defeat whereas the U.S. has the power to keep fighting beyond such a defeat.

Hence, what is involved is political decision, political intelligence, political flexibility. To some people it may seem more "profound" to discuss U.S. policy in terms of inexorable socio-economic drives expressing the contradictions of capitalism in its late stages. No doubt, U.S. policy has something to do with that. But the immediate decisions are not at all inexorable; otherwise, why should critics trouble to press for alternative policies and proposals? The immediate decisions are made by men in power—men who can err, men who may prove to be irrational or ideologically blinded, and men who can be voted out of office.

•

THE POSSIBLE DOMESTIC REPERCUSSIONS are frightening. Every sensitive person, of no matter what opinion, has the feeling that the country is in a deep moral crisis, affluence or no affluence. Every sensitive person knows what an enormous social effort must be made to avert disaster in the cities. And the virtual certainty is that as long as the war continues, that effort will not be made. Not made for intrinsic economic reasons or because of political-psychological resistance? It barely matters. As long as the war continues, the effort will not be made.

The country is suffering a deep malaise. I recently spent several weeks at a major Midwestern university, and I was impressed by the extent to which the students—far, far more than the tiny leftist segment—are contemptuous of the Vietnam War, suspicious of the government, and sometimes even inclined to be impatient with the whole ethos of democracy. Their disaffection, often quiet and without political expression, runs deep. Now it is all very well for certain sorts of wise men, such as one meets both in universities and labor unions, to tell us that this disaffection will evaporate after a time or turn into a new kind of conformism. Perhaps so; though I don't see why the young of the sixties *must* repeat the worst experiences of those who grew up in the thirties. But meanwhile it is surely

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a social fact of the greatest importance that large numbers of young people—the best, the most selfless, the most idealistic—do not accept the dominant rationale of American politics. It is surely a fact of great importance that precisely the kind of young people who would usually be absorbed into the governing elite of American society are in rebellion against it. (I could even imagine that a sophisticated defender of capitalism might feel it more urgent to regain the loyalties of the articulate young than to continue the war in Vietnam.)

Some of this youthful opposition is so desperate, so frustrated, that it succumbs to a rhetoric which could prove more dangerous to those who employ it than to those against whom it is directed. At the university I visited, I found myself repeatedly having to make certain observations which, to me at least, seemed elementary: that the U.S. is not now in a "revolutionary situation" nor soon likely to be; that the notion of an "insurrectionary" alliance between rebellious students and ghetto rioters is either self-comforting talk or sheer adventurism; that a politics of "confrontation" could only be advantageous to the Far Right. But in truth, as I discovered, most young people who indulge in "revolutionary" rhetoric don't really take themselves literally, though they very much wish and deserve to be taken seriously. Their language reflects despair over the war and despair at what may happen this summer in the cities. And which honest person does not share that despair? I found it easier to argue against talk about "revolution," than to persuade the dissident students that a perspective of political struggle—which means much more than electoral activity—made sense. And with some reason: right now the prospects for any decent outcome in the 1968 elections are pretty dim.

If I respond to the despair and idealism of the students, I also cannot help listening to the realism of certain friends in the labor movement who keep warning about the danger of reactionary backlash. When I spoke about this to the students, they tended to discount such a possibility, in part because they had lived mostly on the campus, where the "main enemy" was likely to be not-unsympathetic liberal professors or administrators, and in part because they don't (I think) have an adequate sense of what this country is really like.

Where, they wanted to know, is the backlash? There aren't any white vigilante mobs on the street. Things are pretty quiet. Etc.

True enough, but only up to a point. For the kind of analysis which the left-wing students offer these days ought to make them more sensitive to the backlash threat. In modern American society everything tends to become bureaucratized—even vigilantism and backlash. This isn't to say that the possibility of white mobs countering Negro mobs is out of the question; not at all. Visiting Detroit, I was told of "preparations" that sections of the white community, including relatively sedate middle-class sections, were making for the next flare-up. But still, most of the vigilantism seems likely to take a more structured and bureaucratic form: through the police, through deputies, through the National Guard. And if the white suburban folks roused by the idea of "order in the streets" aren't inclined to move into the inner city for some street fighting, they certainly show a strong inclination—both middle- and working-class—to vote for those who use that insidious slogan. I don't agree with some of the political conclusions Alex Garber draws in his report from California in this issue, but certainly the data he presents merits serious attention.

•

ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE of us who *are* friends of the labor movement and *do* speak out against the excessive attacks upon unions that come these days from both Left and Right, the attitude of the AFL–CIO toward the Vietnam War is a cause for despair. The venomous attack made by George Meany against those unionists who, under the auspices of SANE, had gathered in Chicago to express some mild criticisms of the war—who can feel anything but revulsion against such vulgar methods? No wonder that today among committed students and liberals there is little of that instinctive sympathy which a few decades ago was felt for the unions! A certain kind of calculation has it that the unions no longer need the idealism of the young or the friendship of the intellectuals, so securely are they rooted in the society. But this is a calculation at least

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

open to question—and certainly there remain many trade unionists who feel it is part of their commitment *as trade unionists* to respond humanely and with social imagination to such problems as the war.

One rationale sometimes offered is that the trade union ranks are so solidly prowar, the leaders can't be critical. But recent polls indicate that the division of opinion among unionists is almost exactly like that in the population at large. Another rationale has it that certain more progressive unionists have had to remain mute in order successfully to carry through their wage negotiations. But the negotiations are over, and successful; why then do they not say something, however moderate it might be?

For I think that even a significant minority of the union movement now beginning to question Johnson's war policy could, *at this point*, have large consequences. Fissures of doubt and dismay are running through the entire society; a great national crisis is mounting. Will the response of the trade unions be no more than a bleak repetition of the Rusk rhetoric? Will it be no more than to recall the progressive legislation enacted in the early days of the Johnson Administration, as if somehow the war were a mere trivial nuisance interfering with the orderly gains of the welfare state? One should like to hear from Walter Reuther.

•

OUR PROBLEM REMAINS: how to mount a sustained campaign against the war while yet working in such a way as to defend democratic values and improve democratic institutions. It is by no means easy. Democracy is very far from perfect, and the system we have in this country is full of flaws and of impediments to the realization of democratic values.

It may well be that a Presidential election offering us the choice of Johnson or Nixon will demonstrate a failure of the democratic system at this particular point. Indeed, it becomes clear that American democracy is suffering a major crisis in performance and premise, quite the greatest since the Civil War.

In these circumstances, there will surely be people who will become impatient with or contemptuous of the democratic idea. Understandable this may be; defensible it is not. If there will be no serious option in the Presidential election, then we shall have to concentrate our efforts on other electoral points where real choices are available. And over a longer time, we shall have to think hard about ways of reconstructing the democratic system so as to make it more in accordance with its formal claims.

Right now, everyone will find his own way. Some will work for Senator McCarthy. Some will be active in SANE, Negotiations Now, and other peace groups. Some will choose the path of civil disobedience. Some will try to persuade their fellow unionists to break from the Meany-Lovestone line and join with those who, like Victor Reuther, have criticized American policy.

Still . . . let's not delude ourselves. It looks like a hard year ahead. For serious people the only conclusion will be to dig in deeper into political work.

The Dedijer Case

THE STATE DEPARTMENT has denied Vladimir Dedijer admission to the United States and has thereby prevented him from taking up his duties as a visiting professor at MIT.

That the government should so fear a critic as to shut our doors to him is a revealing commentary on the Johnson Administration's self-confidence. So while keeping Dedijer out of the country is at bottom an affront to liberty, it is also evidence of how panicky Washington has become. But there is a particular irony in the Dedijer case. Dedijer is a maverick in the Communsit world. Moreover, he has often been accused of, and punished for, being pro-American.

It was his instinct of independence that thrust him forward; first, as a resistance leader against the Nazis, second, as one of Tito's allies against Stalinism, and third, along with Djilas, as a defender of freedom against the Tito regime itself.

Having recently participated in the Russell

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tribunal, he has brought down on himself the official enmity of the United States, where, over the years, he has won many friends and admirers. There is much to be said against the Stockholm proceedings; and the wisdom of Dedijer's service in them may well be questioned. But that has nothing whatever to do with admitting him to the U.S.

On each occasion, frightened authoritarians have sought to keep his voice from being heard in their land.—M. P.

Victoria Bonnell & Chester Hartman

Cambridge Votes On The Vietnam War

THIS PAST FALL, peace groups in over a dozen cities across the nation sought to place the issue of the Vietnam War before the voters in the November municipal election through use of the initiative petition or referendum.* This novel use of the referendum formally to register opinion on a foreign policy issue was first tried in 1966 in Dearborn, Michigan, where 40 per cent of the voters supported a resolution calling for "an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of United States troops from Vietnam."

The concept of the referendum, with its emphasis on familiar forms of electoral politics and its potential for reaching out into the community, greatly appealed to the antiwar coalition that proliferated throughout the country in response to the call for a Vietnam Summer. In most cities, however, legal and practical obstacles proved so formidable that the Vietnam referendum never reached the ballot. Only two cities, San Francisco and Cambridge, Massachusetts, succeeded in reaching the ballot, and then only after prolonged and costly court battles.

Cambridge, despite its popular image as a university town, is in many respects typical of other American cities. With a population of 100,000, Cambridge has a high concentration of manufacturing industries which employ about 30 per cent of its residents. Another 25 per cent work in business and sales, the same percentage as in the nearby Boston metropolis. About half the population has not completed high school and earns less than $6000 a year. Canadians, Irish, and Italians are the largest ethnic groups, and nearly two-thirds of the people are Roman Catholic. Yet Cambridge is somewhat unusual because of its two major universities, Harvard and MIT. The large number of students and faculty who live there has a major impact on the peace movement in the city, and antagonisms between town and gown create serious difficulties for organizing antiwar sentiment among working-class people.

THE REFERENDUM IDEA grew out of a need to provide meaningful activity for people already organized by a local peace group, the Cambridge Neighborhood Committee on Vietnam (CNCV). Led by Michael Walzer, a 31-year-old professor at Harvard and an editor of DISSENT, CNCV helped mobilize hundreds of students, faculty members, and housewives to ring doorbells and set up neighborhood discussion groups about the war.

When the CNCV first began considering the idea of a Vietnam referendum, there was some opposition within its leadership, principally from the radical students, who argued that involvement in electoral politics would undermine community organizing, by sacrificing in-depth canvassing for the superficial contacts of a political campaign. The situation was complicated by the fact that another group, composed largely of Progressive Labor party members and SDS-ers, had for several months been gathering signatures for a Vietnam referendum which asserted that "the U.S. should get out of Vietnam" because "the war is not in the interests of American workers and students and serves only the interests of business." This group undertook its referendum primarily as a means to organize the working-class com-

* Although for simplicity's sake, the term "referendum" is usually used in this article, the correct legal term for the Cambridge and San Francisco activities is "initiative petition." Technically, the latter term refers to an effort to introduce a legislative act or resolve through popular petition, while the former term refers to an effort to amend or repeal an existing law.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

munity and educate workers to a "Marxist interpretation" of the war. Ideological differences between this group anl the CNCV leadership were very great, and differences were greater still when compared with the CNCV constituency, which was predominantly liberal in orientation. Following several acrimonious meetings, the CNCV finally voted to conduct its own referendum campaign. As it turned out, the other petition failed to obtain sufficient signatures to secure a place on the ballot.

With almost no significant disagreement, the CNCV endorsed a formulation which stated that: "Whereas: thousands of American and Vietnamese are dying in the Vietnam War; Whereas: this war is not in the interests of either the American or Vietnamese people; Now therefore be it resolved: that the people of the City of Cambridge urge the prompt return home of American soldiers from Vietnam." Adoption of this wording that called, subtly, for immediate unilateral withdrawal of American troops was based on three assumptions: (1) most of the campaign workers, particularly in the early signature-gathering phase, would probably be drawn from the radical students who would find a milder formulation unacceptable; (2) people who opposed the war would probably vote for the referendum even if they preferred a milder position; (3) the political impact of a strong vote in favor of a withdrawal statement would be far greater than a somewhat larger vote supporting negotiations or a halt to the bombing.

As it turned out, the specific wording of the referendum was never an important issue in the campaign; only some middle-class opponents of the war were troubled by the withdrawal formulation. In general, the campaign pivoted around the basic issue of the war and not around "prompt return home" of U.S. troops.

FROM ITS INCEPTION, THE CNCV attempted to draw support from all sectors of the Cambridge community and to establish an image of responsibility. The first step was the choice of three sponsors for the referendum whose names had to appear on each petition sheet: a local Roman Catholic parish priest, a well-known Negro Episcopal minister, and Professor David Riesman of Harvard. Later, newspaper ads were placed in the local weekly, bearing the names of some 500 respected Cambridge clergymen and citizens, urging people to "Vote Yes on the Cambridge Referendum."

Among the public supporters were John Kenneth Galbraith, ex-Senator Maureen Neuberger, and Nobel Prize winners George Wald and James Dewey Watson. The group's image was further enhanced by the respected Cambridge lawyer Hans Loeser, who represented the CNCV in its court battle. There was not a single incident of "red-baiting" during the entire campaign.

Soon after the CNCV submitted its petitions with signatures of nearly 8,000 Cambridge voters, the City Solicitor refused to permit the certification process to proceed, holding that the subject of the petition was not a fit matter for city business. This decision was made despite the fact that the City Council had passed three prowar resolutions in the recent past. The CNCV promptly brought the case to Middlesex Superior Court and after much skillful maneuvering by its lawyer, a favorable judgment was rendered in time for the referendum to appear on the November ballot. The Massachusetts court, relying heavily on the California Supreme Court's decision on the San Francisco referendum, held that, in effect, anything the Cambridge City Council could do could also be done by right of initiative petition.

The CNCV campaign led to a large-scale registration drive directed toward graduate students and young faculty members, many of whom were eligible to vote but were not registered. This steady stream of new registrants aroused fears on the part of local politicians that these new anti-Vietnam voters would significantly alter the balance of power in the city. As it turned out, the estimated 2,000 to 2,500 people who registered in behalf of the referendum probably were responsible for the election of the one Council candidate who openly supported the referendum.

The actual campaign for the referendum lasted only four weeks (due to the late court decision), but was exceptionally well-organized. The principal emphasis was placed on door-to-door canvassing, which succeeded in reaching 50–60 per cent of all households in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

city. In all, nearly 500 people, organized into 40 ward and precinct groups, canvassed for the referendum. Whenever possible, canvassing crews were composed of local residents, although in working-class areas this was possible only to a minimal extent. Most of the canvassing was done by housewives, young faculty members, and graduate students. Few undergraduates were involved in the canvassing, in large part due to the CNCV's desire to avoid giving the referendum campaign a "student image." (Undergraduates were active in distributing leaflets and in Election Day work.) For the most part, the people who worked were recent recruits to the peace movement. Few SDS-ers joined the campaign, and most of the young radicals who had originally opposed the referendum drifted away from the organization.

The canvassing effort was concentrated in areas which appeared to have some potential for success. This meant that in effect a few working-class areas were canvassed lightly or not at all; one predominantly Irish-Catholic working-class ward did not even have a CNCV organization.

There was surprisingly little organized anti-referendum activity until the final ten days, when the city's veterans' groups published some ads in the local weekly and organized for Election Day. They did manage to make Election Day look like an American Legion parade (dozens of sound trucks and cars decked out with flags and posters). Indeed, an intimidating atmosphere prevailed at many polling places: some CNCV poll workers were threatened and maligned, and entering voters were sternly admonished to do their patriotic duty by voting against the referendum.

On November 28, when the results were finally tabulated, 11,349 persons (39 per cent) had voted for the referendum and 17,742 (61 per cent) had voted against it, with a remarkably small number of abstentions (1,960, less than 6 per cent of all who had voted). This was slightly better than the San Francisco results had been (37 per cent for, 63 per cent against). Support for the referendum was lower than anticipated in the predominantly upper-income university sections but substantially higher than anticipated in the working-class districts. The university areas voted between 50–64 per cent in favor of the referendum. In the working-class areas the vote went as low as 18 per cent and as high as 43 per cent, generally ranging between 22–35 per cent. The referendum won in 14 of the city's 55 precincts, and tied in another. Even if the two predominantly university wards are omitted from the vote, better than one out of three voters (35 per cent) expressed themselves against the war.

The local press interpreted the results as a clear repudiation of the Administration's policies. The *Boston Globe* editorialized on Nov. 30:

> That the Cambridge antiwar proposal should lose by just 6,372 votes out of more than 29,000 cast should be as much a shocker to Washington policy-makers as was the 36.5 per cent vote in favor of a similarly worded antiwar proposal in San Francisco three weeks ago. . . . The affirmative vote is all the more remarkable because it was registered in the face of the most concentrated prowar propaganda campaign the Administration has yet mounted. . . .
>
> In the circumstances, the White House would err grievously if it interpreted the Cambridge vote, following right on the heels of the vote in San Francisco, as anything but a startling demonstration of a steadily growing antiwar sentiment. . . .

WHAT, FINALLY, WERE THE EFFECTS of the CNCV's campaign on the Cambridge electorate?

The educational aspect of the campaign had several weaknesses. In the limited time available to the canvassers, it was impossible to engage in prolonged discussions. This meant that the burden of educating fell to the literature that was left in every home willing to take it (some 100,000 pieces of literature were distributed). The principal piece of campaign literature was a leaflet that was shallow in content and attempted, in several brisk sentences, to answer some of the main Administration arguments (that we are containing China, stopping Communism, etc.) without ever suggesting that these might not be the most important questions to ask, and without

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

presenting any facts (for example, that it is basically a civil war) which might enable people to challenge the fundamental assumptions that led to our involvement in Vietnam. The second major item distributed was a reprint of *Boston Globe* editorials, selected primarily because of their "respectability." The *Globe* editorials similarly failed to challenge the basic assumptions of the war. In sum, the campaign probably did little to change preconceived notions about the war; but it probably served to give many who had doubts about the war the feeling that dissent at the ballot box was an acceptable form of opposition.

The larger question must be raised as to whether a campaign of this sort can really provide the opportunity for any meaningful education. In retrospect, it would appear that the inherent time constraints and the inevitable drive to maximize the vote are powerful barriers to in-depth organizing.

The very choice of electoral activity, however, appealed strongly to people—many of them under 30—who only recently had become sufficiently disenchanted with the course of American policy to devote their personal energies to opposing it. The trend, as exemplified by Cambridge, is for increasing numbers of such moderate people to join the peace movement in order to work on projects like the referendum and, perhaps, in Senator McCarthy's campaign. But most of the radical students have simply turned away from such work, preferring draft resistance and university protest.

The Cambridge referendum has undoubtedly established the CNCV as a potent political force in the city. It has built an extensive ward and precinct organization that is well suited to future electoral activities. Hundreds of people have become involved in active political work—some for the first time—and many citizens have been made aware that they do not stand alone in feeling uneasy about, if not absolutely opposed to, the war in Vietnam. Nevertheless, the campaign failed to bridge the hostility between town and gown and to establish any solid organization among working-class people, even though the referendum received a substantial vote in some working-class neighborhoods. The CNCV was clearly a middle-class, university-oriented outfit, and many working-class people voted against the referendum because of who they perceived was running or backing the effort. CNCV tried mightily to give itself the aura of a city-wide organization of all races and all classes—and indeed there was some truth to the claim—but the popular image was that CNCV and a "yes" vote were associated with intellectuals, hippies, and draft-dodgers. (One voter wrote on his referendum ballot: "Get the hippies out of Cambridge.") The CNCV's reach into the community remains confined to predominantly middle-class sections of the city.

Alex Garber

"The Matter With California"

In the 1890's Kansas—dominated by Republicans since Civil War days—fell to the control of the Democrat-People's party. Political passions were fired so high that armed conflict in the capital was threatened. This state of affairs became known as "The Matter with Kansas," and was then attributed to the combined irascibility of the Populists and the intransigence of Republicans.

California politics is now in a similar situation. Not since 1939 has so conservative an administration ruled the state. Little likelihood exists, of course, for an attack on Sacramento, although armed members of the Black Panther party stormed the Statehouse last May, preceded earlier by the largest protest march in the capital's history against the Governor's cuts in education and his tuition proposals. Reagan's "Creative Society" has confronted none of the state's problems. Instead, it has displayed undue deference toward the affluent and complacent, those who crave protection for personal privilege, police power to solve social problems, and immunity from rising demands for jobs, housing, and education.

During his first year of office Reagan affronted Negroes and Mexican-Americans with his antiwelfare and "crime in the streets" cam-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

paigns. He also victimized the elderly and infirm by efforts to undercut Medi-Cal and mental-hygiene services. Organized labor was defied by his use of convict labor as farm workers. His most harmful assault upon the poor was inflicted through regressive taxes. These undertakings met with resistance from liberal legislators, and state politics were plunged into fierce turmoil.

All too many Californians viewed this performance in Sacramento as a political morality play with Reagan in the sympathetic role of Everyman. Their overwhelming support for him in the gubernatorial elections of 1966 was consolidated last August when the Republican, Milton Marks, won a state senatorial by-election in San Francisco. A statewide mustering of Reagan forces had effectively organized Marks's campaign—in the midst of last summer's riots—aimed at splitting the trade-union and Jewish vote and at defeating Assemblyman John Burton, erstwhile New Leftist and brother of Congressman Philip Burton. California's most liberal metropolitan county thereupon entered Reagan's camp, even though ten months earlier San Francisco had rejected Reagan by a 50,000 plurality.

To dismiss Reaganism by glibly invoking California's reputation for zany politics is to misunderstand the conservative nature of the Republican strategy. With Reagan's accession to the governorship, four out of five Democratic state executives were swept from office, six new Republicans won state senatorial seats, seven Democratic assemblymen lost out, and three additional conservative Republicans were dispatched to Washington. These returns and their consequences in Sacramento bring to mind a pre-election prognosis of *Ramparts*: "if anything is certain in the miasmic politics of California, it is that no Reagan victory, however sweeping, will seriously diminish Democratic power in the legislature."

Ramparts still chooses to ignore the fact that California's profound political shift in 1966 followed on the heels of two years of racial agitation. In 1964 there was the open-housing referendum, in 1965 the riot in Watts, in 1966 the riot in San Francisco, the vandalism in Oakland, and the black-power mass meeting in Berkeley's Greek theatre. George Murphy's senatorial defeat of Pierre Salinger on the coattails of Proposition 14 was the first forewarning of the electoral potency of racism. Two years later, with a full range of racial issues in public focus, Reagan adopted and "improved" Murphy's approach.

In 1966 the electorate responded in terms of a white backlash, particularly virulent among blue-collar workers. By comparison with the 1962 returns, the Republican gubernatorial support mounted 36.6 per cent while Pat Brown's fell 7.5 per cent. At the same time, however, samples from Los Angeles and Alameda county precincts of blue-collar voters revealed a loss for Brown of 28.5 per cent *and a gain for Reagan of* 41 *per cent.* The backlash was manifested not as a drop in the blue-collar vote but as a wholesale switch—greater than the shift in the state as a whole. Thus Brown, who in 1962 received 59 per cent support from these blue-collar workers (over 5 per cent more that his statewide percentage), got only 40 per cent of their votes in 1966 (2 per cent less than his statewide total).

An altogether different response emerged among Negro voters, as is illustrated by the 1966 vote in Watts. Their turnout for Brown, again in comparison with 1962, increased by 5 per cent, while their vote for the Republican gubernatorial candidate declined 16 per cent. Of the Watts electorate 88 per cent supported Brown in 1966, over 2½ per cent more than in 1962. Yet the impact of this increased bloc vote was not significant because Negroes comprise only one-twentieth of California's voting population.

Mexican-Americans, who constitute a greater proportion of the state than the Negroes but participate less in elections, were caught up in the cross-pressures created by the backlash. On the one hand, as a sample in a Los Angeles district indicates, they gave Brown fewer votes in 1966 than in 1962—a 15.8 per cent drop. Their hostility toward Negroes accounted for their indifference toward an administration that had favored civil rights. On the other hand, they could not embrace a backlash directed against them also. The Mexican-American vote for Reagan fell off 7.8 per cent. In the end, however, they turned out

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an approximate 59 per cent vote for Brown, slightly less than in 1962.

That the white backlash succeeded in fragmenting California's electoral coalition of labor, liberals, Negroes, and other minorities is apparent in these voting patterns. Originally put together in 1958 and invigorated by the "right to work" threat, the then triumphant coalition carried Brown to the governor's chair and won all but one statewide executive posts, a majority of the Congressional seats and, for the first time in over 60 years, a Democratic majortiy in both the State Senate and Assembly. Eight years later, with this coalition fractured, a complete electoral reversal occurred, proving that without a full coalitional backing, the Democratic party of California must fall into traditional impotence.

As long as the coalition remains dismembered, the other registered parties try to live off its entrails. George Wallace entered California last fall expecting an easy recognition of his American Independent party by attracting conservative Republican registrants and their financial support. Although he won several members of the Republican state central committee and received some large contributions, he found it extremely difficult at first to secure 66,059 registrants.

The California Election Code almost prohibits newly formed parties from contesting legislative or Congressional seats. A candidate in the primaries must be a registered member of his party for 90 days. In addition, he must not have been a registered Republican or Democrat for a year. This virtuallly excluded Wallace's AIP from the primaries and left him only with a Presidential slot in the November elections. But with Reagan as the national hopeful of the conservatives, Wallace was thus put into direct and unfavorable competition with the governor's ambitions. He was compelled to secure additional funds from his Southern supporters and to enlist the services of Alabama state employees for an accelerated registration drive. After a second and extended trip to California Wallace was able to gain the necessary signatures, in great part from transplanted white Southerners who are registered Democrats generally.

If Reagan receives his party's nomination at Miami, Wallace's influence upon Republicans will be minimal, while AIP inroads among Democrats will be comparatively more impressive. If, however, Nixon is the nominee, Wallace will win increased Republican support. In contrast to Reagan, Nixon is viewed by conservative Californians as both a moderate and a loser. In any event the AIP, although beamed toward a wide spectrum of discontents, will have no influence in the primaries and little effect on the outcome of the general election. Wallace's potential as a spoiler in 1968 will have to be developed in other states.

The newly qualified Peace and Freedom party, more a mood than a party, attracts New Left campus elements, ardent black-power advocates, and liberal dissidents who want their demand for "immediate withdrawal" from Vietnam brought to the hustings. Endorsed by disparate groups like *Ramparts,* the DuBois clubs, the Maoists and SDS forces, it plunged into a last-minute registration drive "to equal and surpass" the AIP. Like Wallace, it urged those who wanted to participate in the primaries to sign up and then reregister Democratic before the April deadline.

Previously, Peace and Freedom embarked on two mixed electoral ventures. In San Francisco's mayoral elections, Proposition P for "immediate withdrawal" netted 76,000 of the 210,000 votes cast. This was less than the minimal 40 per cent that might have been expected for an expensive campaign costing a dollar per vote. In San Mateo's Congressional race, Edward Keating, encouraged by his 31,000 votes in the June 1966 primaries, returned for a second round. Despite the increased number of candidates, Keating stood out as the sole New Leftist and the only candidate with previous ballot exposure. Nevertheless, seven out of every ten of his former supporters abandoned him, and he ended up with 8,800 votes. The electorate (perhaps taking its cue from the *Ramparts* editorial staff) cast Keating away "like an old shoe."

Electoral activity with its built-in testing of political viewpoints is only a temporary way station for those New Leftists who are traveling toward chemo-messianism through

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hallucinogens. Stable political organization, unlike chiliastic demonstrative action, requires unremitting and arduous devotion not evident in the life-style of many New Leftists. This alone makes the future of Peace and Freedom questionable. It will not be significant in immediate terms, and to rely on it to bear fruit by 1972 is to forget that most of its members will have passed 30 by then.

The California Democratic party is in a protracted dismal state—divided over Vietnam, weakened by an inability to relate volunteer groups with elected officials, estranged from large sections of labor and academic liberals, and torn by rivalry between a Johnson and a McCarthy slate. The Johnson slate will undoubtedly win by at least 2 to 1, although Reagan in the Republican Presidential primaries may outpoll Johnson. Any expectation that Johnson's primary victory will herald party amity is unfounded. The liberal CDC with its diminished influence and heightened factionalism is adamant against the national party leaders. No longer an instrument for party revival, it is seriously thinking of bolting when its peace slate loses in June.

REAGAN AND THE CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICANS necessarily benefit from this state of affairs. They have penetrated the coalition by breaking off and winning a major chunk of its labor vote without making a single concession to labor interests and thus maintaining conservative control in a unified party. Now that the California conservatives have come into their own, even Senator Kuchel sees no need to straddle a two-party electorate —as did Earl Warren in his gubernatorial days—and he is planting both his feet in Reagan's camp.

All this remains obscure to California's democratic-left liberals who accept a system of friends and foes which defines organized labor as enemy. Instead of working with COPE to defeat the white backlash and re-win blue-collar workers, many of these liberals will sit on their hands or go fishing this election year. They fail to realize that "the matter with California" is the consequence of a fragmented coalition such as Reaganism seeks to extend to the country.

Stanley Plastrik

Israel Now— A Few Questions

IN LAST YEAR'S ARAB-ISRAEL CRISIS most of us on the democratic Left supported the Israeli cause. Our justification for this had little, if anything, to do with Zionist sentiment. The existence of a small democratic state (whose every action we did not necessarily approve) was clearly endangered. The Arab nations had announced their intent to "wipe out" Israel; aided by the Russians, they had mobilized substantial forces; in closing the Gulf of Aqaba, they had taken warlike actions. Under similar circumstances, we ought to defend the right of any threatened people to exist.

The six-day *Blitz* transformed the Near Eastern picture; most of all, it changed the relation between Arabs and Israelis within Israel itself. The Jewish state now incorporates about 1 million new Arabs plus the 300,000 already there. The ratio of Jew to Arab has been reduced from 8 to 1 to 2 to 1. Given the substantially higher Arab birthrate, the Arab population could draw even with the Jews within 20 years. This alone gives a new urgency to the need for a permanent solution.

Yet, almost a year after the war, there is clearly an impasse. Those of Israel's supporters who feel that, because of the startling victory, a moral compulsion (largely but not exclusively) rests upon Israel to offer concrete and negotiable proposals, may feel disappointment. With the exception of border *kibbutzim* once directly under Syrian guns, Israel seems no more secure now than before the war. The proposals held out by some Israelis of divisions within the Arab camp as a consequence of defeat appears to have lessened considerably with the new-found—perhaps temporary—political harmony which has seen King Feisal of Saudi Arabia abandon his Islamic Alliance as a rival to Nasser.

Most significant of all has been the Russians' ability to snatch victory from defeat by furthering their penetration in the eastern Mediterranean. The altered balance of power in a once Anglo-American sea now seems final

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and, in the end, may prove to hold greater international significance than American efforts in Southeast Asia. Shades of Czarist imperialism! The Red Navy has filled the vacuum created by British withdrawal, American bungling, and a happy merging of Russian expansionist with Arab nationalist needs.

And for all this, the price paid by the Russians is relatively insignificant: a momentary humiliation last June as its client states collapsed; the cost of the lost armaments plus their replacement; the potential risk of futile involvement in Arab internal strife such as in the Yemenite civil war.

THERE ARE THREE MATTERS which have brought growing concern to friends of Israel. These are the issues of territorial expansion and annexation; the Israeli attitude toward Arab refugees; and the proposed solutions put forth by Israel.

Has the Israeli leadership become expansionist? Have they become indifferent to the fate of the Arab refugees? And are the Israeli proposals narrow and nationalistic, lacking in conciliatory content? To be sure, the continued intransigence of the Arab leadership and its refusal to engage in direct negotiations makes it difficult to judge fully the Israeli views since they are not being subjected to the test of counter-views. Nevertheless, certain things are known.

First, the episode of the return of Arab refugees who had fled to Jordan. There were the difficulties created in order to keep these Arabs in the inferior environment (new refugee camps) of the West bank to which they had fled. Further doubt concerning Israel's policy was created by her unilateral annexation of Jerusalem in defiance of two U.N. General Assembly votes; this annexation has caused bitterness in the Arab world and criticism in the Christian world. As far as other occupied territories are concerned—the Gaza strip, Syrian heights, Sinai peninsula, West bank of the Jordan, etc.—the question lies not in whether Israel should temporarily hold them while awaiting a final settlement (at best a tactical problem where Arab rigidity again plays into Israeli hands), but whether or not Israel has any plans for their *permanent* incorporation. Within the Israeli leadership there seems to be a sharp division on this matter. But any effort to make these conquered areas a part of Israel would be a serious error.

The problem of the Arab refugees is still more grave. Here we touch upon human beings long-suffering and victimized. There are two distinct negotiations which must take place. First, between Israel and the surrounding Arab states. Second, between the Israelis and representatives of the Palestinian Arabs of one or another kind (Christians, Muslims, etc.), and in one or another area (West Jordan, Gaza, etc.). During the war something like 200,000 refugees crossed over into Jordan to be dumped into make-shift camps. About 140,000 of them applied to return, but repatriation did not begin until mid-August of last year. Only 19,000 applications were approved by Israel and only 14,000 repatriations were carried out by the time Israel's deadline expired on August 31. Shortly thereafter began a small but significant movement of Israeli *kibutzim* into former West-bank Jordanian lands which had been overrun by Arabs back in 1947–48. At the same time, Israel refused to take back 60,000 refugees who had previously lived in permanent U.N. camps on the West bank. Israel's handling of the Jordanian Arabs has been marked by a disturbing "toughness."

General Dayan has said:

> I am against facile theories according to which we have the means to handle by ourselves this problem of the refugees. There is no place for a million Arab refugees within Israel. The solution cannot be found within our limited space and by us alone, but only within a regional framework.

Precisely. But what does Dayan mean by "limited space"? What is his vision of postwar Israel? What is the "regional framework" to which he refers? We ought to agree that a "solution" of the refugee problem does not mean their permanent establishment in U.N. camps, but the launching of a process which, with Arab participation, aims to create for the Arab refugees a proper national setting within which they will become permanently integrated —in a word, a program of national rehabilitation.

THAT SO MANY "SOLUTIONS" are offered (binational state, confederation, independent Arab Palestine, etc.) only indicates that a real solu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion is as remote today as it was 20 years back. How can one expect even the beginnings of a settlement and entente when, on the one hand, the Israelis have failed to make clear their basic stand on the issue of territorial aggrandizement, and on the other hand the Arab leadership maintains its intransigent refusal either to recognize Israel or accept its right to exist? Writing in a publication which has leaned toward the Arabs, Mr. Maurice Zeitlin is obliged to say:

> In the course of my research since the June war and the re-thinking of my critique of Israel's policies, I have become persuaded that even had the left socialists (in Israel) been in power, and had Israel's Arab citizens been treated with the fullest justice, the policies of the Arab regimes would not have changed significantly, nor would their unmitigated and unrelenting hatred of Israel and commitment to its destruction. (*Ramparts*, January, 1968)

The tragic dilemma in which the most liberal-minded and thoughtful Zionists consequently find themselves is expressed by Joel Carmichael in the January *Midstream*:

> . . . It must be admitted that from a purely democratic point of view a bi-national state would doubtless emerge from the mere juxtaposition of the two communities. . . . And if the Arab community within Israel ultimately achieves parity, and is democratically represented in the organ of government, it is hard to see how an Israeli government could avoid the curbing of two rights that it is bound to regard as fundamental . . . the right to control both immigration and land-development. If an Israeli Arab community roughly the size of the Israeli Jewish community were to be fairly represented in government there is . . . no reason to think it would tolerate the promotion of these two cardinal goals of the Zionist movement. . . .
>
> If an Israeli government were to accept the binational state with all its implications it would, in fact, be surrendering its entire historical perspective and would indeed become, sooner or later, "just another Levantine state."

Carmichael, in turn, has been dealing with a sensational article by Cecil Hourani, a Lebanese Arab intellectual, directed to his fellow Arabs and published in the November 1967 *Encounter*. Hourani suggested that the demographic and social situation within Israel could, within 50 years, lead to a diminution of the gap between Arab and Jew. But he nevertheless sharply posed the difficulty thoughtful Zionists such as Carmichael must wrestle with:

> . . . If the Israeli Government accepts the Arabs within the territories she controls as full Israeli citizens, with equal civil and political rights, the concept of Israel which has hitherto been incorporated into her laws will have to be changed. Israel will no longer be a Jewish State, in which, as it does now, full citizenship requires not only membership of the Jewish religion, but Jewish ancestry. It will become a Jewish-Arab State in which nationality will be a function of residence or citizenship. Israel, in other words, as she has been since 1948, will no longer exist, and Palestine, with Arabs and Jews living together, will have been restored. If, on the other hand, the Israeli authorities refuse to accept the Arabs . . . she will have on her hands a large population which she will be unable to liquidate or to govern.

THERE IS NO EASY WAY out of such difficulties. On both sides, public opinion has hardened. In Israel, the parties of the Left (Hashomer Hatzair, Mapam, etc.) are sharply divided over proposals for the future. At best, they agree among themselves that the ancient land of Palestine will remain in one or another form the co-property of two independent nations and peoples, and that a major effort, compatible with the national interests of each people, must be mounted so that the refugees will cease to be refugees. This may be a solid point of departure from which to develop practical proposals, but right now one ought not to delude oneself as to the strength of such influence in Israel.

Whatever ultimate solution, if any, can be envisaged for the Middle East, the preliminary to serious negotiations is that both sides offer a token of their wish for a pacific settlement. This means that the Arabs recognize Israel and its right to exist, and that the Israelis (as proposed by the left socialists of Mapam) declare their willingness to rescind control of the occupied territories once a peace treaty is signed. As long as the Arabs persist in their refusal to negotiate with an Israel they recognize as a historical reality, there can be no progress. And as long as the Israelis remain ambiguous about the occupied territories, they provide the Arabs with a pretext for refusing to negotiate.

It is a tragic dilemma, and right now no solution seems to be in sight.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jean Bloch-Michel

A Letter from Paris: The Decline of Europe?

"ENGLAND," SAID A EUROPEAN STATESMAN, "offered a Europe of computers; Couve de Murville chose a Europe of sugar beets." Beyond the political considerations that led General de Gaulle to veto England's entry into the Common Market, there was, indeed, the choice between computers and beetroots. The General chose beetroots.

Some people now are worried about England's future. But if the French believe they will not have to pay a price for the Gaullist policy of false grandeur, they are mistaken; the French may have to pay more dearly than anyone else. The day after the Brussels veto, M. Pierre Uri wrote in *Le Monde*: "As in the reign of Louis XIV and Napoleon, France may well come out diminished from this dream of grandeur."

Much has changed since Louis XIV and Napoleon; but if the comparison is incorrect, it may be because it is too optimistic. After all, France recovered quite well from the "dreams of grandeur" of Louis XIV and Napoleon. The question today is whether France has not embarked upon a course of irreversible decline.

This is the warning sounded by M. Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber in his new book *The American Challenge*. For if there *is* an American challenge, it is dangerous only to those unable to face it. The book does not propose an anti-American strategy; it is a very clever and lively popularization of the latest data on economic and operational research, especially those published by Herman Kahn and the Hudson Institute.

M. Servan-Schreiber starts from two assumptions. First, American investment in Europe is growing and no government can stop it: to ban it means merely to drive it into a neighboring country. Second, this investment means control; American corporations buy European enterprises and integrate them into their own. Future decisions on these enterprises will be made in the American home office. And if American take-overs continue, decisions affecting the future of European economy will be made in America.

Servan-Schreiber's next point is taken from Herman Kahn's projection that, by the year 2000, there will emerge a "post-industrial society" confined to the U.S., Japan, Canada, and Sweden. The rest of the world, including the Soviet Union and Western Europe, will still remain at the "industrial" and "pre-industrial" stages. The Soviet Union, with its power and resources, will sooner or later become "post-industrial." But Western Europe is in a different situation.

Not that Western Europe can never become "post-industrial." The problem is that it will enter this stage as a dependent of the U.S. Whatever the living standard—even if almost up to the American level—Europe thus will lose control over its destiny. After having been the center of Western and, to some extent, world civilization, Europe will then enter a phase of cultural decline. Within a century it will become to the world what Greece is now to Europe—a museum.

WILL EUROPE ANSWER AMERICA'S CHALLENGE, or will it submit to annexation? This now is the question, and Europe will have to deal with it. And what is the source of America's power? Its wealth of natural resources seems only of secondary importance. Most important is the size of its domestic market—the kind of adminsitration and financial organization of its enterprises, the joint role of state and private enterprise in research, the constant and fruitful "cross-fertilization" among government, free enterprise, and universities. No need for further detailed description—the reader is quite familiar with these facts.

Nonetheless, this description itself is useful. It helps us to understand what has been done in America, and that what was accomplished there can also be done in Europe. It also helps us understand that this cannot be done in France, Germany, or Italy—but only in a united Europe. Only if Europe will finally be unified, politically and economically, will it have sufficiently large markets and investments needed for key industries that might one day catch up with those of America.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In Europe these key industries—chemistry, titanium metallurgy, electronics—lag so far behind America that some people, including Herman Kahn, think that Europe will never catch up. In any case, Europe is making no effort to catch up. For reasons of prestige, France forces Europe to prefer beetroots to computers. Even projects that at first look like efforts in the right direction turn out to be, on closer examination, prestige projects. The Concorde, as M. Servan-Schreiber presents it, is a striking case in point.

MANUFACTURED JOINTLY by the British and the French, the Concorde will fly in 1968; the first mass-produced planes will be delivered in 1971. The American supersonic transport plane, the Boeing 2707, will not be delivered until 1974. The three years' difference is presented to the general public as a sign of success, and the impression is conveyed that Europe has for once outpaced American technology. Actually, it has done nothing of the kind. America's advantage in this case—and America, indeed, again has the advantage—lies not so much in the sizes of the respective planes or the number of passengers they can carry (136 for the Concorde, 300 for the Boeing 2707) as in speed. The Concorde will fly at Mach 2.2; the Boeing at Mach 2.7.

The difference means little to the layman; but it includes the major obstacle to supersonic flight, the so-called heat wall. At the speed of the Concorde, its outer walls will reach a temperature of 150 degrees centigrade; at the speed of the Boeing it will be 270 degrees. Now, up to 150 degrees, the classical alloys of the aviation industry can be used. Beyond that, other alloys are needed, so far neither used nor even obtained. Therefore, the essential difference between the Concorde and the Boeing is this: the Concorde will be built with the standard aluminum-base alloy; the Boeing will be the first titanium-based plane. Or, as M. Servan-Schreiber puts it: "The Concorde will be the last of the classical planes, the Boeing the first of a new generation of planes, conceived entirely for supersonic flight." And so, while neither of the two planes has flown as yet and the Boeing will fly three years later then the Concorde, the order sheets tell a different story: 74 for the Concorde, 112 for the Boeing.

"Operation Concorde," to use its publicity name, is therefore an operation lost from the start. It is also typical of the mistakes made by Europeans, even when they get together on a project. The money was invested in an operation that is almost certain to prove a financial loss and has been conceived entirely for prestige reasons. An equivalent investment in operations that don't catch the attention of the general public, like metallurgical research or the manufacture of integrated circuits, might have helped to prepare Europe for a valid technological take-off.

M. SERVAN-SCHREIBER'S BOOK contains many more such examples; but let us pass on to its conclusions. First, only a politically united Europe can plan and execute enterprises that can meet the American challenge. This cannot be done without a policy of advanced social justice, and for this reason: it will require close cooperation at all stages and levels among government, management, and labor.

A "number one priority" will be needed for all forms of education: modernization and democratization of elementary and secondary schooling, adult education, and continuous re-education of technicians and management. Such a policy might equip Europe to enter the post-industrial society and to remain a center of decision-making; but this would require a speedy overcoming of all archaic prejudices, be they national, class, or "elitist."

England's entry into the Common Market, followed by that of the other EFTA countries, would give Europe the aid of British technology, which is almost on the American level. It would turn the Common Market into an economic unit of a size that would give Europe a base for creating an economy as advanced as the American. But it is obvious that British technological superiority and the influence of the new Common Market members would change the political balance: the dream of a Europe directed by a Big Two of France and Germany, or by France alone, would vanish into thin air. But General de Gaulle has chosen the dream of political independence at the risk of Europe's annexation to the American economy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

63rd Annual Conference of the

League for Industrial Democracy

April 26, 27, 1968

The Hotel Commodore New York City

America at the Crossroads: 1968

Friday, April 26th, 8:00 P.M.

"Toward a Democratic Left"

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Chairman, League for Industrial Democracy; author, *The Other America, The Accidental Century,* and the forthcoming book, *Toward a Democratic Left*

Saturday, April 27th, 10:00 A.M.

Liberals and the 1968 Elections

JOSEPH RAUH, Jr.

—Vice-Chairman, Americans for Democratic Action; distinguished civil rights and labor attorney

GUS TYLER

—Assistant President, International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; author, *The Labor Revolution*

Saturday Luncheon, April 27th, 12:30 P.M.

Chairman—**MICHAEL HARRINGTON**

Tribute to—**ADOLPH HELD,** Honorary President, Jewish Labor Committee, by Nathaniel M. Minkoff

Remarks by—**PAUL JENNINGS,** President, International Union of Electrical Workers, AFL-CIO

Presentation of 1968 Annual Award by Mr. Jennings to **RALPH NADER,** author, *Unsafe at Any Speed,* champion of consumer rights

Presentation of Special Award to **ALBERT SHANKER,** President, United Federation of Teachers, AFT, AFL-CIO

League for Industrial Democracy 112 East 19th Street, New York, N.Y. 10003

☐ Enclosed is $.....for.....tickets for the LID Annual Luncheon @ $8.50 (includes admission to all sessions).

☐ Enclosed is $.....for.....tickets to the following sessions @ $1.00 each per person.

☐ Friday evening ☐ Saturday morning

☐ Saturday after-luncheon speeches (1:15 P.M.)

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....Zip .....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Little Symposium on

The McCarthy Campaign

We asked a few friends to analyze the McCarthy campaign—here are their responses. Martin Peretz teaches at Harvard and has been active in the peace movement; Joseph Clark wrote "Of Views, Aims, and Dogmas: A Letter to my Son" *for our May–June 1967 issue; Albert Kramer is the pen name of the staff member of an AFL–CIO union.*—ED.

1. *Martin Peretz*

EUGENE MCCARTHY has demonstrated enormous political courage in challenging President Johnson directly in the primaries. He is not a man much given to the quixotic gesture. And since he has risked the ire of the supremely powerful in this country, we can be sure that he has done so only because of the most compelling conviction that this war is, by any measure, beyond the endurance of moral men. We were not prepared that it be he who would do battle with Johnson.

His last great splash had been in 1960 as a dissident voice at the convention that nominated John Kennedy for the Presidency. Save for the Stevenson speech in Los Angeles, he has never been the master of what in America goes for great rhetoric. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., his friendship for Senator McCarthy notwithstanding, composes no immortal prose for him.

Even now, Bobby Kennedy's public utterances make him appear more at odds with the President and in tune with the nation's insurgent young than does McCarthy. But Kennedy, who is wont to tell you at the mere sight of a handful of coeds that the country is in a crisis comparable only to the ordeal of union a century ago, will not take even the slightest risks. Perhaps he is sustained by the characteristic solipsism of small men in thinking that the nation would be in greater crisis still if he were to fall flat on his face. So Gene McCarthy must carry the torch for peace, however limited by lack of funds and staff and what the journalists call charisma.

MCCARTHY MERITS OUR ESTEEM on these grounds alone, and most especially because he must know that though it is he who is making dangerous investments, it may be the Junior Senator from New York who will do the inheriting. Apparently, the candidate takes even that philosophically. A more cynical man than he would, in these circumstances, be more distrusting of the feckless establishment liberals now giving him advice, even as their hopes reside elsewhere and they wait poised for an opportunity to show how fickle they can be.

He takes all this stoically, and he is not a driven man or a possessed one. We are so accustomed to the mechanized and relentless smoothie as aspirant for high public office that we are disoriented by someone who is reflective, self-conscious, and honest. What would be so wrong with a President whose worst quality would be that he is laconic?

I am, of course, not optimistic about McCarthy's chances. But I have little

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

patience for those who fear a weak showing by him will push Johnson to the Right. More often than not, this argument comes from people who really like Johnson just where he is, though nowadays they are not always willing to admit it.

As for those shrill incendiaries of battles past who now assure us that—hang the Vietnamese!—we can have a war as well as more welfare and an extension of civil rights, their feel for what is politically possible makes even less sense than their economic calculus. In any case, the one option for democratic radicals is trying to restore some semblance of democratic choice to our politics. And anybody with the slightest awareness of how even this sorely debilitated system works knows that even a circumscribed minority—providing it is organized, has a reservoir of post-election élan and is strategically placed geographically and at particular points in the class structure—can exert fulcrum strength in setting limits to the exercise of power. The political experiences of the last generation, successes as well as failures, suggest that electoral work is the one mode of activity that can galvanize people into such a community of shared values and effort.

Only our most ebullient left flanks will not see this. Demanding an ideological posture from McCarthy which they know he does not hold, they will perversely prefer the ugly lucidity of the present incumbent. Then, at least, the worst predilections of their theories may come to pass. Denying the campaign their support is not, however, the kind of "conscientious withdrawal of efficiency" of which Veblen spoke. Rather, it is self-defeating—at least for those nondogmatic radicals who are embarrassed into a hands-off attitude by the sneers of the doctrinaires. Such decent, well-intentioned, and non-sullen radicals could have, and in some places—even as this is read weeks after it is written—might yet make a difference. At least in the creation of new coalitions with an active Left that is conscious of the need for vision in politics, if even it is now still barely able to describe that vision.

UNFORTUNATELY, MANY of McCarthy's generals seem to believe that it would be desirable to do without the ardors of the Left. They are sorely mistaken—though I do not mean to imply that McCarthy should make position concessions to the Left. Clearly, his politics—whatever their infelicities—are his. But even he seems to believe that the ADA liberal intellectual professionals, now belatedly against the war and behaving as if their opposition legitimates everyone else's, can actually turn out warm, working bodies. Warm, working bodies are after all a necessity in any campaign. Who can blame the Senator, who has been over the years closer to them than to us, for eyeing their promises covetously? But with the exception of California, they cannot and they have not for more than a decade turned out the troops. Even in California, the recent revival of the Left Democracy was largely induced by the real threat of wholesale defections of very populous Left factions from the party.

The cautious trimmers, animated at best by nostalgia for conscience, and having embraced McCarthy, have been able to affect the style of the campaign. That style reflects the dead-hand of American politics: the unarticulated canon of elitist evasiveness and the amply articulated dogma of the Cold War in its most dubious manifestations. The Albert Schweitzer Professor of the Humanities at City College was after all the ideologist of our squalid little war against the Cubans, to fix only on the one incident where his intellectual taste for belligerence actually appeared somewhat to sway events. But they all speak in those cock-sure, jaded tones that even McCarthy, an honest man, is not entirely able to resist. If the campaign is made the vehicle of those ambitious, now middle-aged lawyers, and Washington-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

oriented academics already calculating the steps back to respectable docility, there the independently war-anguished or even war-apprehensive citizen will see it as yet another sham event—as almost all the forays of the Democratic reform elements have been. But if the campaign is free-wheeling in a rather old-fashioned American sense, and if it is tough and to the point, there is some chance that McCarthy may catch on. With the fortunes of this war being what they are, the strategy of telling the truth and the strategy of political success are at last and self-evidently one.

2. *Joseph Clark*

EVEN BEFORE THE ADVENT of universal manhood suffrage, national elections were the occasion of widespread popular agitation. Whether the contests were between Republican-Democrats and Federalists, adherents of slavery or freedom, progressivism, populism and the New Freedom or McKinleyism, rugged individualism or the New Deal, old or new frontiers, the course of our history was always vitally affected by the electoral process. The outcome of an election was often decisive in determining the path taken by America.

More than ever before, political campaigns and elections, are the major means for determining policies. Barricades and civil war are hardly likely methods for making important decisions or accomplishing change in the nation. Reform rather than revolution is the method by which popular demands will be advanced. History has settled the issue and revolutionary posturing helps no one but the right-wing reactionary. The desires of an impatient elite, even when armed with the latest word from Debray, will have little effect on the march of events. Nor will electoral politics centered on splinter parties be of any value in settling anything, or in clarifying matters in any way.

Though many issues face the nation today, all are related to the war in Vietnam. Social priorities, the crisis of the cities, race relations, the hopes of America's youth—all lie in the shadow of Vietnam. A writer in the *Wall Street Journal* (Jan. 17, 1968) describes the cost of the war:

"Every day, in fact, brings fresh evidence that the bill, foreign and domestic, far exceeds anything the nation remotely perceived as it slid into its involvement there, and far exceeds anything the nation perceives even now."

It is interesting that the *Wall Street Journal* writer counts not only the cost of the war in adversely affecting the balance-of-payments problem, inflationary pressures, and the diversion of federal resources from domestic welfare, but in "the rebellion and estrangement of so many young people, clergy and academicians."

SO WE OWE SENATOR GENE MCCARTHY a vote of our deep appreciation. He took up the challenge when others faltered. He put the Vietnam issue where it belongs—in politics, in an arena where people can be influenced, organized, and where voters can be aroused—at this stage, primarily in the states where McCarthy has entered the primaries.

The studied moderation of McCarthy's initial appearances and speeches were helpful, I think. Those who shape Johnson's Vietnam policies would enjoy nothing so much as identification of the McCarthy campaign with the political hippies and adherents of the Viet Cong. McCarthy has to exert heroic efforts to remain in the mainstream of politics, the only place where he can be effective against Johnson's war.

If McCarthy wins some of the primaries or does exceptionally well, the course of national policy can be affected, positively. It's even conceivable, though hardly likely,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that Johnson will switch his position in midstream. That would be fine. What's more likely—if McCarthy wins substantial support—is that he, or another Democrat, perhaps Kennedy, or a Republican, perhaps Rockefeller, will be elected in November and will take the Vietnam conflict to the peace table. With the experts forecasting very small support for McCarthy there is little to be lost if this is indeed the case; a decent effort should win far more support than is expected. Whatever happens, McCarthy will have earned the gratitude of the nation.

3. *Albert Kramer*

I AM NOT REALLY "AGAINST" McCarthy. He strikes me as that rarity in public life, a decent man; and as a still greater rarity, a man willing to take some risks in behalf of his beliefs. Morally, the contrast between him and Bobby Kennedy is devastating, because Bobby cares about being President and McCarthy cares about the health of the country. Perhaps that's a simplification, but it's a useful one.

Yet the whole McCarthy campaign strikes me as an effort in futility, and not because of the kinds of criticisms you hear nowadays—that he is too low-keyed, that he hasn't created a good enough organization, etc. None of that really bothers me. I think his campaign is an exercise in futility, with possibly dangerous repercussions, mostly because he doesn't have behind him a large or significant or powerful enough segment of the population.

THE UNIONS HAVE PROFITED from LBJ's social legislation; they either don't give a damn about the war or share in gutter patriotism. The Negro movement is shattered in a thousand directions, whipping itself up into furies of rhetorical impotence. The New Left kids, all aflame for a "revolution" they can't really imagine (let alone make), find McCarthy square, dull, liberal.

So who's left? Some disaffected Democrats, some liberal academics. Nice people. My heart is with them. But in some years of political and trade-union experience, I've developed a capacity to count, if nothing else. And by my count there just aren't enough of these disaffected intellectuals. In fact, that's one of their characteristic mistakes: they confuse themselves with the Amerian people, they don't want to distinguish between their noble sentiments and the more mundane attitudes of the mass of voters.

At least if the New Left kids were willing to work for McCarthy, there'd be some troops—even if irregulars. But they're not. They prefer confrontations with the Far Right. Well, bless 'em; while praying they don't live to see their fantasies made actual.

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN, I suspect, is that McCarthy will go down in defeat; and it will be an ignominious defeat. That will leave LBJ in complete control of the Democratic party—with Master Bobby curling his locks and sulking. The likely result of the McCarthy challenge will be to reveal the *weakness* of the doves, and this in turn will encourage kooks on all sides: the Far Right bent on breaking heads, the Far Left bent on offering heads.

All I can suggest to the kind of people who read DISSENT is to do what you can to help out those liberal Congressional candidates who also happen to be doves. Don't blame me if this doesn't strike you as an appetizing prospect. I don't like it either. Not a bit. But remember: it's still the world we never made.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Michael Harrington

Strategies for Opposition

The Draft—Tax Refusal—"Resistance"

THE WAR IN VIETNAM has given rise to more agonies of conscience than any conflict in which America has participated during this century.

The reason for this moral anguish is not hard to find. In the First and Second World Wars and in the Korean War, the overwhelming majority of the American people believed that their country was acting in self-defense against German, Japanese, or North Korean aggression and was therefore justified in the use of violence. There was a tiny minority of pacifists who refused service. In World War I, some of them were political opponents of American participation, but in World War II most maintained their position on the basis of a transcendental commitment to abjure the use of force under all circumstances.

With the tragic intervention in Vietnam, however, popular opposition against the war became widespread. It went far beyond the ranks of the religious pacifists and was widely prevalent among the most intelligent and idealistic of the young. (What empirical data we have on the campus activists of the sixties indicates such a correlation between scholarly attainment and political concern.) At this writing, it has spread to the majority of the best students on the finest campuses.

These deeply held, but unpacifist, attitudes toward the Vietnam War could not be contained within the traditional categories which the society had established for conscientious objection. In some cases—the simplest to deal with—this was a legal matter, for the federal statute permitted exemption from military service only to those conscientious objectors who professed a belief in a "Supreme Being." In other, and more complex, instances, students and intellectuals asserted an obligation, under the doctrine proclaimed by the United States in the Nuremburg trials, to refuse any form of support to the military effort, such as paying taxes. Finally, some asserted a right to disrupt the prosecution of the war through nonviolent civil disobedience.

These various issues are obviously related to one another, yet it is extremely important to understand the different questions they pose and to treat each in its turn. What is at stake in all of them is a definition of the relationship between politics and morality in that extreme situation when the state proclaims its right to take life and orders the citizen to execute, or cooperate with, its command. Hopefully, this larger point will become clarified in the course of analyzing the specifics of protest.

My own analysis is based on the following premises:

I reject the proposition that a society's decision to employ violence against its alleged enemies cannot be questioned. That is the conclusion of some absolute forms of judicial pragmatism; it is the faith of the superpatriots. In this context, I take it as a gain for the entire nation that the young have insisted upon the necessity of making a con-

This article is adapted from a longer essay which will appear in A Conflict of Loyalties: Selective Conscientious Objection, *edited by James Finn and to be published by Pegasus in the summer of 1968.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scientious decision about the political use of violence. As the late John Courtney Murray, S.J., put it, "the student community is to be praised for having raised a profound moral issue that has been too long disregarded in American life."

But I also oppose the notion that one can easily violate the law in a democratic society. Democracy is an excruciatingly imperfect method of political organization—but the very best there is. In its present form, where legal equality before the law is systematically contradicted by economic and social inequality, the democratic structure must be radically transformed. The best way to do that is through democracy itself, and this requires that the losers abide by the political victories of the winners. If the democratic structure collapses under the strain of its tensions, then politics will take to the street, but probably not in nonviolent form. And from the point of view of human freedom, a tragedy will have occurred.

Second, I believe that, in Reinhold Niebuhr's terms, it is "blasphemous" when an individual casually pretends to be the voice of God and thereby places himself above his fellow citizens.

In short, I hold that, even in a manifestly inadequate democracy, the individual is normally obliged to obey the laws but may, under extreme and limited circumstances, be required to break them. In what follows I propose to apply this principle to the very difficult task of defining some important relationships of politics and morality as they have been posed by the horrible war in Vietnam.

THE PRESENT SELECTIVE SERVICE STATUTE should be both reinterpreted and revised in order to provide atheist and agnostic objectors with the same legal status as members of peace churches, and to permit exemption on the basis of moral opposition to a particular war. This would grant federal protection to peace activists, the bases of whose actions are now wrongly considered to be only political and who are therefore excluded from the exemptions provided by the present law.

When the courts and the Selective Service system originally interpreted the present statute, they did so in a literalist, undemocratic and antilibertarian fashion. The language of Congress demanded (wrongly, I believe) that the objector base his claim on belief *in* a Supreme Being. The government proceeded to insist upon a narrow, textbook definition of that Being and, in effect, restricted the protections of the law to members of the historic peace churches. Atheists and agnostics whose positions were rooted in deeply held convictions about the nature and destiny of man were sent to prison.

This interpretation of the law was, I believe, unconstitutional and, even though the courts have thus far rejected this assertion, I hope they will eventually come to recognize it. Simply put, the First Amendment should apply to religion in a completely nonsectarian way. Definitions of the religious spirit by thinkers like William James and Paul Tillich have already made a persuasive case for extending the concept to any transcendent commitment, earthly as well as heavenly, and this should be the rule of the courts. The effective establishment of theistic religion which has prevailed for more than two decades should be ended as soon as possible.

In recent years there have been some signs that the judiciary is moving in this direction. In the Seeger case, an agnostic objector had been denied even a hearing on the grounds that his lack of religious affiliation *a priori* excluded him from any consideration under the law. The Supreme Court responded favorably to a due-process appeal but not to the substantive issue of whether the "Supreme Being" proviso was constitutional. It held that the question of belief in a Supreme Being was complex and that it was therefore wrong to assume with-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out a hearing that an "agnostic" could not possibly qualify. The local board then gave Seeger an exemption.

The Court's strategy in *Seeger* was to work within the limits of the present statute and to duck the more basic issue of the constitutionality of the "Supreme Being" test. Given the hallowed American tradition of repealing bad laws by intelligent judicial reinterpretations of them, the very phrase, Supreme Being, could eventually be taken as symbolic Congressional language for any deeply held, ultimate principle, and atheists would thus be qualified as objectors under the present rules. It would, of course, be infinitely preferable to have a clear declaration on the unconstitutionality of the current language. But, in any case, it is imperative that the society accept the claims to conscientious objection of agnostics and atheists as well as of Quakers and Mennonites.

But such a reform of the law does not resolve the issue of politics and morality. It is only a first step. For it does not deal with the citizen who, on formal religious or philosophical grounds, refuses to serve because he is against a particular war. Here I would argue that anyone who can show that he is opposed to all wars *or all wars of a certain type* should be granted objector status.

In making this last point, I would distinguish between moral objection to war, *or a war*, and political objection to a war. The moral objector invokes a principal that requires him not to kill at all, or only to kill when certain conditions of a "just war" are present. In the course of coming to his decision, he may well take political considerations into account, *i.e.*, a major Christian tradition requires that the war itself be "just," and a judgment on this criterion will inevitably intermingle politics and morality. But even then, the obligation being stated is a transcendental one in the sense that it requires the objector to refuse combat in any and all situations which fail to meet his criteria. It is not that he is simply politically opposed to the war, but that he maintains a moral position in which such political opposition makes it conscientiously impossible for him to be a participant in that war

Such an attitude can be distinguished from one of political opposition pure and simple. Here I would take the figure of Lenin as an illustration of my point. Lenin was against Russia's case in World War I, heart and soul—he was a "revolutionary defeatist." Yet he did not believe that his political stance required him to refuse military service. Exactly the opposite. Since he believed that the only way to end this war, and war itself, was by the revolutionary overthrow of the existing order, he urged his followers to go into the army precisely because they were antiwar. For, he argued with some prescience, it was in the army that the upheaval would begin.

A relatively small minority of the antiwar young in America today adhere to this Leninist position. I cite this case, not because it is at all typical, but rather to show that political opposition to a war, and moral objection to serving in it, are not the same thing.

But most young political opponents of the war today are, I believe, in a heart-rending dilemma. On the one hand, they are horrified (rightly I would say) by this particularly ugly, futile combat in Vietnam; on the other hand, they are not absolute pacifists and yet they do not have the Leninist

. . . And Hope to Die

PENSACOLA, *Fla.* — *Barry Goldwater says he is convinced that California Gov. Reagan is not seeking the Republican Presidential nomination.*

"He has told me many times he is not and if he'd lie to me, he'd lie to his mother," Goldwater said at a news conference.

—*AP* dispatch, January 27, 1968

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hope that being drafted is a worthwhile step toward revolution. They have the worst of all possible worlds.

UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE Selective Service law and administrative practices should be changed so as to allow for principled moral objection to a specific war. Here again, as in the case of atheists and agnostics, it would be possible to sneak into a decent position by juggling with the current phraseology. For that matter, this writer was granted full objector status by a St. Louis draft board in 1951 after clearly enunciating a "just war" position. But it would be much better if American society made an honest, candid decision to broaden the scope of its respect for conscience. For that is what is at issue: whether this nation is going to insist that an entire category of individuals should be under legal compulsion to violate the dictates of their own conscience.

The National Advisory Commission on Selective Service took up this question and, by a majority vote, decided to urge that objector status be reserved for absolute pacifists. I think they were wrong.

John Courtney Murray, S.J., was a supporter of the American presence in Vietnam —and an advocate of the rights of "selective conscientious objection" in that war. In a speech at Western Maryland College shortly before his death, Murray made an excellent statement on the significance of the "just war" position:

> It is not exclusively Roman Catholic; in certain forms of its presentation, it is not even Christian. It emerges in the minds of all men of reason and good will when they face two inevitable questions. First, what are the norms that govern recourse to the violence of war? Second, what are the norms that govern the measure of violence to be used in war? In other words, when is war rightful, and what is rightful in war? One may indeed refuse the questions, but this is a form of moral abdication, which would likewise be fatal to civilization.

The majority of the National Advisory Commission voted against Murray's lucid presentation. They said,

> It is one thing to deal in law with a person who believes he is responding to a moral imperative outside of himself when he opposes all killing. It is another to accord a special status to a person who believes there is a moral imperative which tells him he can kill under some circumstances and not kill under others.

The law, in other words, will provide exemption for a conscience formed in the Quaker tradition but not for one educated to traditional Catholic norms. And the Commission apparently believed that a simple statement of the distinction between the two positions was one justification for it. Yet in both cases even the Commission's language admits that the individuals are responding to "moral imperatives." Why honor the one and send the youth obedient to the other to jail?

But there are other reasons asserted beyond this *ipse dixit*. "Moreover," they continue, "the question of 'classical Christian doctrine' on the subject of just and unjust wars is one which would be interpreted in different ways by different Christian denominations and therefore not a matter upon which the Commission could pass judgment." But the Commission is not being asked to pass this judgment on the various advocates of the "just war" position any more than it has to choose between, let us say, Protestant and Jewish versions of absolute pacifism. It is being asked to suggest a public policy toward those who, for whatever serious and deeply held reason, feel themselves morally compelled to refuse service. Indeed, it is precisely the Commission's negative attitude toward selective objection which takes it into the area of making theological judgments. It is in favor of the selective protection of conscience and it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

uses religious criteria to determine which shall be respected and which shall be outraged.

The Commission also says that "selective pacifism is essentially a political question." In view of the fact that it had held, in the previous paragraph, that this question is taken on the basis of a "moral imperative," I do not take this point very seriously.

Indeed, the one substantive rationale for the majority decision which I found—and with which I disagree—is this:

> . . . legal recognition of selective pacifism could open the doors to a general theory of selective disobedience to law, which could quickly tear down the fabric of government; the distinction is dim between a person conscientiously opposed to participation in a particular war and one conscientiously opposed to payment of a particular tax.

I will postpone commentary on the second part of this objection (tax refusal and conscientious objection) until I have considered the first point about tearing down the fabric of government.

In societies where the political majority supports a war—and since this issue is raised within the framework of democratic principle, we can base our discussion on that presumption—the number of conscientious objectors will, I am convinced, be small. The basis of this opinion is sociological, not ethical. It merely states the fact that, under nonrevolutionary conditions of a majority democratic consensus, the emotions of patriotism and conformity are alas usually stronger than those of individual defiance on the basis of morality.

To be sure, there can be mass resistance to war under certain circumstances, I am told that a significant number of French Canadians avoided service out of nationalist convictions during World War II and effectively kept their government from sending draftees overseas. In World War I, there were well-known cases of desertion and revolt by the enlisted ranks in the Russian, German, and French armies. The Russian and German examples show what is possible in a pre-revolutionary situation; the example of the French, whose uprising was brutally supressed, what can happen under conditions of military defeat.

Note that these rents in the "fabric of government" were not made because the Tsar, the Kaiser, or the French President recognized a principle of selective objection but because those societies were undergoing great upheavals in which "normal" obedience to law no longer made sense to great masses of people. Were such social conditions to occur in the United States, there would be similar disaffections from the society, no matter what the Selective Service law. However, the discussion is not really over how to maintain stability during revolutionary times but as to what kind of protections a stable democratic country should afford to a conscientious minority. And all the evidence indicates that such minorities will, in the absence of great transformations, be quite small.

IF THERE IS any real danger of injuring the fabric of government in this Vietnam war period, it comes from *not* recognizing the rights of selective objection. For it is precisely this policy which has caused so much anguish of conscience, made youthful opposition more and more frenzied, and even driven some to voluntary exile in Canada. No political situation in my memory has occasioned so much despairing discontent with the society, and a sophisticated pragmatism should have impelled the National Advisory Commission to provide some honorable alternative for young people who are now required to choose between jail and self-betrayal.

But my own advocacy of selective objection is not based on such pragmatism. I am convinced that, as Father Murray said, there is a principled "just war" position involving transcendental moral obligations which can

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

impose itself upon the conscience of religious, agnostic, and atheistic citizens. I believe that a democratic society should not require its citizens to violate their deeply held principles. And I am convinced that it would be a relatively simple administrative problem to distinguish the committed from the frivolous, the evaders, and so on.

There is in all this, let it be freely admitted, more of a political dimension than is found in absolute, unconditional pacifism. Yet the basic justification for the policy advocated here is the respect that a democratic society owes to the moral convictions of its members.

LEGAL REFORM TO GRANT OBJECTOR status to atheists and agnostics, and to permit selective objection on a moral basis, can easily be justified within the present legal framework of the United States. But the question of tax refusal, on the grounds that the government is engaged in an immoral exercise and that tax payment would implicate the citizen in this guilt, is something else again. For there are indeed those who have accepted the logic of the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service and who have, with radical intent, defended a "general theory of selective disobedience to law." This extends the primacy of the individual moral judgment into political spheres where it has not been recognized in the past. So in terms of the general theme of this chapter it is a case eminently worth examining in some detail.

First of all, it is important to distinguish between the compulsion directed against a soldier, or even a protestor enjoined from *marching*, and that exercised against a tax payer.

The soldier is being drafted into a situation in which his support of what he regards as an immoral cause will be personal and immediate. He can be ordered to kill or to facilitate killing, and he may himself be executed if he refuses, particularly at the front line. He is therefore being told to give the utmost cooperation to an action which he regards as profoundly wrong. If he does not make his stand before induction, then the price of obeying his conscience, which now includes the possibility of his own death, has risen so high that only the most heroic person will, or can be expected to, accept martyrdom.

A less dramatic, but somewhat analogous, case occurs when a march is enjoined by a court. It may well be, as Martin Luther King, Jr., obviously believed in Birmingham in 1963, that to obey such an order would constitute an irreparable loss to the movement. The precise moment for action may come only once, and a retreat would mean that the group is not simply being asked to postpone a demonstration but to sacrifice its cause. This element of immediacy is made all the more acute when there is a very real possibility that higher courts will reverse the decision of the lower tribunals, or that a federal appeal will overturn a state decision. For all these reasons, deliberate disobedience of the law may become necessary even though those involved are working within the democratic process.

A similar situation arises when the law is being used as a hypocritical instrument of injustice. The use of "trespass" statutes to enforce a *de facto* segregation is a case in point. In the sit-in decisions, the Supreme Court of the United States effectively admitted that normal democratic process had so broken down in the South—or rather, had become an instrument of antidemocratic tyranny—that Negro youth were justified in anticipating a higher federal legality by disobeying a local ordinance. But this retrospective justification of the nonviolent campaign in the lunch rooms and department stores depended partly on the fact that the youth had *correctly* anticipated the federal law.

Now all of these cases are, I submit, much more immediate than the act of paying taxes. But even more to the point, the tax payer

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who believes the war to be immoral has a clear alternative open to him, one that he can pursue without heroic courage and through the exercise of normal democratic rights. In this he differs from the soldier, marcher, or sit-in activist. He can organize politically and change the government which administers the taxes. During the time that he is involved in this campaign he will not be commanded to do anything as decisive as taking another life; he will not be, through paying taxes, subjected to irreparable harm like the protest marcher; he will not be victimized by a mockery of the democratic process like the sit-in student of 1960.

Second, the rationale for tax refusal usually rests upon the old economics.

Here is how Gordon Zahn puts the case:

> . . . we must now introduce a new principle of "conscientious objection to taxation" whereby the individual whose refusal to kill would be respected must now also be permitted to refuse to subsidize and underwrite the killing. Along with this would have to go some arrangement for "alternate payments" to support governmental activities which do not so violate the conscience of the individual. (*Worldview*, March, 1967.)

IN THE PRE-KEYNESIAN DAYS, governments did indeed use tax bills as a means of raising revenues for specific purposes. But even then, there was more than a little deception involved: the bonds which Americans purchased to "buy" tanks, planes, hospital supplies, etc. in World War II were primarily useful in controlling inflation. The military goods would have been produced whether the people purchased the bonds or not. Now, however, Washington has become more frank about its general tax strategy, though it still resorts to patriotic appeals and old-fashioned economics when that is politically convenient (as it has become for Mr. Johnson on the Vietnam question).

The size of the federal budget is now dictated by the general state of the Gross National Product. If the economy has excess capacity, Washington increases its spending in one way or another (through direct public investment, through a tax cut, etc.); if it is operating at full, or over-full, capacity, in theory the government is supposed to hold down demand either through cuts in spending (the favorite solution of the conservatives) or through an increase in taxes.

In this context, President Johnson's 1967 proposal of a tax increase is, despite his politically motivated statements to the contrary, only tangentially related to the war in Vietnam and certainly not "necessary" to the prosecution of that conflict. If there is one certainty in American politics it is that Congress, in a united front of hawks and doves, will send sufficient military supplies to Americans in a shooting war. The real purpose of the tax increase is to act as a damper on the inflationary trends which the Administration economists have discerned.

Now it may rightly be said that these inflationary tendencies were given a considerable impetus by the war in Vietnam—but so was the employment of Negroes, and one would not oppose that. More to the point, if Congress refuses the tax increase, presumably to the cheers of at least some in the peace movement, the result will not be to bring the end of the war in Vietnam any closer but to place the main burden of that conflict upon the black and white poor.

For in the political realities of 1967, the real debate over the tax increase was a liberal-conservative antagonism over what groups should be required to sacrifice most in the fight against inflation. The Right proposed to deal with the problem through cut-backs in social welfare spending, the Left through the utilization of a highly imperfect tax instrument which, for all of its faults, is the most progressive means of fighting inflation the society possesses. Should the antiwar movement, having not yet succeeded in winning a political majority to put an end to the killing, adopt a tactic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whose actual effect will be to tax the ghettos and the rural slums?

WHAT IS INVOLVED HERE IS one more manifestation of the increasing complexity of government. For under the new economics, a consistent "conscientious objector to taxation" would have had to oppose the tax *cut* in 1963–64, for that policy made it more possible for the government to spark the economy and thus increase the tax base in order to raise the actual revenues which it received and devoted, in part, to Vietnam. Under those circumstances, would the principled pacifist have insisted upon paying his tax? For according to our present economic logic, that would have been the only way to make it more difficult for the government to carry on its immoral war.

Most of the people who have been attracted to the notion of tax refusal during the course of the Vietnam War would regard all the foregoing as mere sophistry. Their point of departure is not rational or political, but it is substantial and understandable. Tax paying is one of the few "personal" relationships which the middle-class citizen has with the government. Rightly outraged by a horrible war, many people seek desperately for some way that the individual can communicate his distress to the politicians and the IBM machines. And tax refusal is one of the few means at hand. I sympathize profoundly with those who have taken this position—but I cannot agree with them, and not simply for reasons of economic theory.

One should be careful, particularly in a democratic society, of proclaiming too many "Nuremburg" obligations. The Court of the victors which sat in judgment of the Nazis asserted a natural-law duty of resistance, and even heroic resistance, to clearly immoral military orders. But, and this is a very important point, the country at issue was Nazi Germany, *i.e.,* a fascist dictatorship. Under such circumstances, I would certainly affirm the right of all citizens to civil disobedience and, for that matter, to the violent overthrow of their own government—and the citizen's duty to refuse monstrous commands, even if that meant sacrificing life itself.

But the United States of the Sixties is hardly Nazi Germany; the tax payer is not really being ordered to do anything more specific than to help in maintaining a boom; and there exist alternate methods of bringing the war to an end. Furthermore, once that war in Vietnam is over, I could see Gordon Zahn's principle of "conscientious objection to taxation" put to the most reactionary use. With peace it will be necessary to provide a substitute for more than $30 billion a year in federal spending. It is possible that at least some of this money will be channeled into the economy through direct social investments (if the reactionaries prevail, it will come in the form of a tax cut maximizing individual, rather than social, consumption and commercial, rather than collective, priorities). The committed racists of the South could, under a conscientious-objector clause, refuse to pay their taxes, or that portion of them which would go to the abolition of poverty. And as a matter of principle, Zahn would have to recognize their right to express themselves in this way. In the doing, he might unwittingly help to create a fine instrument for the states' righters.

Finally, the central problem is political. The only way one can effect the purposes which the economy and the tax system serve is to gain control of the government. Tax refusal may well be personally therapeutic and morally exhilarating; but it does not pass the supreme test, for it contributes little or nothing to ending the immoral war in Vietnam. If an individual feels conscientiously compelled to take this course, I would defend all of his civil liberties, but I cannot agree that he has either enunciated a binding obligation or formulated an ef-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fective tactic for bringing the killing to an end.

IT IS A PARADOX THAT, in the fall of 1967 when public opinion polls suggested a majority of the American people were coming to oppose the war in Vietnam, a minority of protesters turned to desperate, anti-political tactics. At the precise moment when the possibility of winning a majority through democratic action had become quite real, these activists chose to move outside of the democratic framework. By far and large their rationale was that the immorality of the government's action was so patent and urgent that the individual was obliged to take direct action to prevent Washington from carrying out its policy. So in this case —the most extreme one to be discussed here—a transcendent ethical duty is assumed to justify, not simply opting-out of the normal political process through tax refusal, but a form of nonviolent sabotage.

As the *New Republic* described this mood in a sympathetic account of a demonstration in October, 1967, aimed at closing the induction center at Oakland, California:

> . . . *Stop the Draft Week* represented the transition from "dissent to resistance." It was a recognition not only of a previous failure to change the Johnson Administration's war policy—that was to be expected —but a deeper recognition of a loss of momentum and a failure of nerve in the face of an exhaustion of tactical possibilities. The new technique is political disruption, an attempt to "stop the war machine," entailing a renunciation of violence while still shrinking from a positive recommendation of violence." (Michael Miller, the *New Republic,* 1967.)

In dealing with this strategy and the philosophy that justifies it, one is not confronting any of the traditional cases for pacifist civil disobedience. In Oakland during that week, the first protest was made according to accepted nonviolent rules. Joan Baez and a group of people appeared at the induction headquarters, made no attempt to resist arrest and went peaceably with the police when they were taken into custody. *They were disobeying the law as a witness to the outrage of their conscience but they were not interfering with those who felt otherwise.*

This form of civil disobedience does not disrupt the democratic process. It allows protesters to manifest the intensity of their convictions and in this way to reach out to the consciences of their fellow citizens. It means that the individual is ready and willing to pay the legal price for making his point. (This writer was twice arrested in the course of such demonstrations and is thus obviously sympathetic to the tactic.)

BUT IT IS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MATTER when it is claimed that the alleged immorality of a government allows the citizen of an imperfect, but still functioning, democratic society to obstruct that government in carrying out its policies and to disrupt the activities of those who agree with that government. This is the right which was being claimed in the fall of 1967. It is not only a rationale for an attack upon civil liberties but could open up an era of intolerance which will victimize the protesters more than those protested against.

Part of the philosophical underpinnings of this position was revealed at a debate at Oberlin College. Students had trapped a Navy recruiter in a car for four hours until police broke them up with tear gas and water hoses. At a discussion of the incident, as reported in the *New York Times*, one participant said that there was no "moral right" to recruit people to fight in an immoral war. Although put forth by a member of the New Left generation this was, of course, a reiteration of the classic, conservative Catholic argument for refusing civil liberties to non-Catholic faiths. "Error has no right," it was said, and is still said in Franco Spain. What the conservative Catholics and the Oberlin students fail to under-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stand is that, although there is indeed no "moral right" for one who is aware of the immorality of a war to recruit fighters for it, there is a *civil* right for a Navy recruiter to state his point of view freely even if those more ethically sensitive than he know that he is objectively acting in an immoral cause. Error has, in short, civil rights, and particularly when it is honest, sincere error. (It also has them when it is insincere, but I am quite willing to grant the *bona fides* of Navy recruiters.)

Consider, for instance, this statement of Jerry Rubin, one of the organizers of the October 1967 demonstration at the Pentagon. In talking about the coming Democratic party convention, Rubin was quoted by *Newsweek* as saying, "Can't you see it—100,000 hippies all around the hall, smoking pot, faking delegates' cards, tossing smoke bombs." The intention of such words is clear enough. It is not to mount a protest, as was done at the Democratic party conventions of 1960 and 1964 by the civil rights movement, but to disrupt a public meeting. (The middle-class, *épater la bourgeoisie* sources of this fantasy are revealed by the fact that "smoking pot" is put on a par with "tossing smoke bombs.")

The theoretical and practical dangers of this attitude are enormous. In the name of morality, a sort of pacifist, and not so pacifist, *putschism* is justified. And indeed at the antiwar march of the Students for a Democratic Society in Washington in 1965, Staughton Lynd specifically argued for the desirability of a nonviolent *coup d'état* in which the marchers would, on their own nomination, represent the supposedly voiceless majority of a democratic society and take over the buildings of government. The poetic imagery which Lynd had used at that time was to inspire at least a wing of the protesters when some tried to rush the Pentagon in October 1967.

But this is not simply a repudiation of fundamental, and precious, democratic principles contained in the Bill of Rights. It is also an invitation to the American reactionaries to answer in kind. And in response to this challenge, former governor George Wallace of Alabama did indeed propose taking the "bearded professors who tell students they are for victory for the Vietcong" and putting them in jail. Thus, as so often happens, the violation of civil liberties in a "just" cause provokes the "unjust" to violate even more civil liberties.

IN A LETTER TO THE *New York Times* (October 27, 1967), Staughton Lynd, one of the leaders of the movement, defended this new tactic. It is a frank, honest and inadequate attempt to deal with the problem. In terms of the movement his arguments are significant and worth considering at some length.

First of all, Lynd candidly admits the criticisms of his position. "Perhaps the commonest objection," he writes, "is this one: Who gave a handful of peaceniks the authority to shut down the United States government or any part thereof?" Second, he recognizes this issue: "When left-wing demonstrators impatiently abandon traditional political methods, do they not create precedents for right-wing direct actionists who, given the present temper of the country, would prove far stronger in any foreseeable confrontation?"

Lynd responded by defending "nonviolent obstructive tactics" as a "form of democratic dialogue." He asserts that he would have no objection if the hawks or segregationists would practice them. This attitude shows, I think, a failure to distinguish between those forms of civil disobedience which deny the civil liberties of others and those which make a witness, whether in political terms or not. The latter case can be contained within the democratic framework; the former cannot. For it is precisely the point of the "democratic dialogue" that its rules and laws are a means of protecting the physical

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and spiritual integrity of the citizen. It is understood in this philosophy that when issues are to be settled in the street—even if the initial intentions are nonviolent—passions and *force majeure* take over. That this *force majeure* may be nonviolent does not change the essential situation, for it embodies an extra-legal compulsion.

Significantly, Lynd does not really answer his own question about the creation of "precedents for right-wing direct actionists who, given the present temper of the country, would prove far stronger in any foreseeable confrontation." He is undisturbed by this possibility so long as the Rightists will stick to some pacifist rules. That is, to put it mildly, a hopelessly optimistic assumption. They will crack heads and those attacked will fight back.

Second, Lynd asserts that "We who burn draft cards, refuse induction, and block doorways believe that we act in response to an executive branch which is out of control." Now three different acts are lumped together in this sentence. Refusing induction may well be an obligation imposed upon an individual by a conscience, or a "witness" form of political protest; burning a draft card can be a form of opposition to a foolish, antilibertarian law and also an antiwar witness; but neither of these acts involves obstructing the rights of the government or of other citizens. And that is not what is at issue here. But can doorways be blocked by a minority in order to dictate to the political process what its majority decisions must be? That is the central question.

For if the executive branch is indeed "out of control," there are many ways of correcting this situation through democratic process. As of the fall of 1967, the United States Senate had not repealed the Tonkin Bay Resolution which the President uses as his legal mandate for the war in Vietnam. But, as Mr. Johnson himself taunted the law-makers, the Senate could move to reconsider at any time. I would certainly agree with Staughton Lynd that it is a tragedy that they did not do so. But the response to this should be to organize a movement to force them to do so *through the democratic process.*

It is significant that one of the precedents which Lynd cites to justify his position is that of the European resistance movements of World War II. He thus confuses a conquered continent under fascist military rule, where the only possible form of opposition was armed struggle and sabotage, with a democratic society in which civil liberties and the rights of political opposition remain quite intact. Yet it seems obvious to me that the right of the European *resistant* is as clear as the wrong of the American disrupter of democracy.

In an aside, I referred earlier to the middle-class mood of much of this protest. I would deepen the point. There is, in this assertion of the duty of a righteous minority to repeal the (to me wrong) decisions of the majority, an element of elitism and snobbery. These protesters show little faith in a democratic people even though the number of citizens opposed to the war was increasingly dramatic throughout 1967. At that very moment when the political strategy was becoming more practical, these young people turned their backs upon it. One reason is that they were rightfully horrified by the monstrous war itself; but I suspect that another was that some of them were having a middle-class tantrum. But whatever the motivation, the assertion of a moral right and duty to disrupt the democratic process is, on philosophical and practical grounds, wrong and dangerous.

IN SUMMARY, THE VIETNAM WAR has posed a number of different questions relating to the boundaries of the political and the moral and the interrelationships between the two spheres. It is intolerably antilibertarian to exclude atheists and agnostics from exemption as conscientious objectors

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the grounds that they are not motivated by belief in a "Supreme Being." The courts could, using the prevailing legislative language, make a definition of Supreme Being in the tradition of William James and Paul Tillich and thus bring any deeply held fundamental principles under the operation of this clause. It would be infinitely preferable, however, if this reform were to be a conscious act of the Congress, for that would give the firmest possible foundation to a nonsectarian reading of the First Amendment to the Constitution.

Second, the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service erred when it refused to grant moral validity to the position of objectors to a particular war. In point of fact, the government's denial of this right is doing much more serious damage to the social fabric than its recognition of this position possibly could. In point of principle, the state does not have the philosophical-theological competence to decide that consciences formed in one religious tradition are deserving of respect while those shaped by another religious, or nonreligious, tradition are not. So it would be a gain for the entire society if the political order guaranteed fundamental rights to such principled, selective conscientious objection.

Third, the "Nuremburg" analogy—whereby direct and personal participation in the genocidal activities of a fascist dictatorship is equated with paying taxes for a tragic war undertaken by a relatively democratic society—is too loose to be compelling. Moreover, the very structural evolution of modern government, particularly on questions of fiscal policy, undermines the assumption that there is any relationship between a particular tax and a war policy. Therefore, there does not seem to be a good case for a *duty* of tax refusal, although individuals may make the *tactical* decision to engage in this form of protest as a form of witness. In the latter case, the debate over tax refusal is not principled, but rather will be concerned with the effectiveness of the witness. I personally do not think it is a very useful form of opposition mainly because it is almost inevitably restricted to the middle class.

Finally, I would make a sharp distinction between these three forms of protest and the assertion of an obligation and right to disrupt the activities of a democratic government through *force majeure*, whether violent or not. Such a policy will threaten the very institution of the democratic dialogue; it will invite savage Rightist reprisals; and it will open up the way to violence. Given the fact that many legal political alternatives are available to the protest movement, there is no justification for such an extreme position. And, perhaps most important of all, this is an elitist stance that justifies an attack upon the civil liberties of citizens, and government itself, on the basis of the presumed moral superiority of a minority.

As a last generalization, it seems to me that anyone concerned with morality and politics should be wary of facile claims that the former must prevail over the latter. For as long as there is a democratic process through which laws can be changed, the presumption is in its favor. There are extreme situations—the pacifist ordered to kill; the selective objector commanded to fight in this war—when the individual must place his conscience above the state. But it would be intolerable if this procedure were made the norm. That would not only overburden the conscience of the individual; it would disintegrate the structures of freedom as they are now known.

Those of us who are against this terrible war are, I think, under a special obligation not to claim privileges from the society, not to tear it down because it has the gall not to agree with us, but to change it. And the fact that we can change it is something not to be too lightly dismissed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Deborah Meier

From a Harlem School

FOR SOME TIME NOW I have been teaching in a Harlem elementary school and trying to understand the attitudes shown by the parents toward the school. Last September, the teachers' strike forced me to speculate on how the hostilities of a minority and the passivity of the majority fit together.

After Labor Day, the season was on for community protest meetings. One night I found myself among a hundred Negro and Puerto Rican women on Manhattan's West Side. I was torn between sympathetic admiration at their determination to do "something" and irritation at the perversity of that "something." Vengefulness and suspicious fury had dulled their ability to distinguish targets. Anything said against schools was guaranteed to produce enthusiastic anger. Speaker after speaker expanded on how the teachers destroyed children, and the audience cheered, stomped and shouted "You tell 'em!"

At one point, a white mother rose and suggested that she also was bitter about the school system, but she could not, as many speakers had suggested, scab on the teachers. The teachers' demands were of a kind parents had always favored and besides, she said, in the long run weren't teachers needed to rebuild a good system and wouldn't their cooperation be important in any community decentralization? Would we really be any better off if the union were destroyed? At which point one woman shouted out: "No teachers allowed here! We don't want no teachers!"

I slumped down in my seat, since I had been explicitly told that no teachers were allowed, and had come only because I was, after all, the mother of three neighborhood public-school pupils. For the moment it was, fortunately, this other mother who had been mistaken for the spy in their midst. And despite her assurance that she was not a teacher, the audience continued to bait her. A woman shouted furiously, shaking her fist: "Has a teacher ever told *you* your home was unfit?" The white mother paused, looked forlorn, shook her head sadly and said, "No . . . you're right, there is no way to communicate." The chairman concluded the white mother's defeat by saying it was pointless to have her remarks translated into Spanish, as was customary.

I left that packed meeting with fear and sadness. How would I work with children whose parents' angers are so intense? And the anger, directed at both the system and the teachers, seemed for the moment logical. Here we are, a nation that has the know-how and wealth to send rockets to Saturn and spend billions in Vietnam. How can we face parents and tell them we cannot teach their children to read properly? In a world becoming hopeless for those with only minimal literacy, this failure is no mere "pity."

In the past the poor "knew their place," and few of them took seriously the idea that they could share in affluence. Now opportunity has been dangled before their eyes, only to prove unavailable in fact—and the resulting frustration is perfectly normal and understandable. Yet the sad truth is that together with this response there are confusions which make things worse still.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE URBAN NEGRO POOR suffer from a heightened sense of grievance based on four widely held myths. These myths make their problems appear both more grotesque and simpler than the reality.

• First of all, they believe that the lower classes of the past—the immigrants of the early twentieth century who came from rural and deprived European communities —were, unlike Negroes today, given an adequate education which enabled them to "make it" in the mainstream of American society. When Negroes ask for the same, they are told about "cultural deprivation" and "bad speech patterns." But didn't the immigrants suffer from these too? Yes; and precisely these former immigrants are constantly reminding Negroes that they succeeded, after all, despite all these handicaps. "What's wrong with you?" they chide. The Negro community answers, defensively, "but you had a good education, and they won't let us give our children one."

In fact, however, America did not give the lower-class Italian, Pole, or Irishman a good education. Nor did he obtain one. He "made it" not because of his good schooling, but because the expansion of the labor market, the development of new skilled trades and the organization of unions coincided with the period of mass immigration. Since for him there were no color barriers, the expanding economy helped the immigrant escape from the lower class. Most immigrants or their youngsters got only a 6th to 9th grade schooling; the high-school graduate was still in the minority and the college student a novelty. Most were content with basic literacy skills—skills Negroes also obtain today but which we correctly label as totally inadequate. The poor, in fact, are asking the school to do something it has never had to do before, and neither they nor the rest of society realize it.

The myth of education as the great social leveller has been with us so long that it has obscured the historical reality. Only today is the school a crucial factor in obtaining any kind of decent employment. Thus, the intense demands made on the schools by Negroes is paralleled by the fiercest pressures from the middle class on the educational establishment, as social and economic status is more and more tied in with academic success.

• A second related myth, often heard in Harlem, is that things used to be better: Harlem schools really used to teach and children really learned in them, Southern segregated schools are superior to Northern ghetto schools, teachers in the South and teachers in the old Harlem were less biased than they are now, etc. In this nostalgia Negroes are forgetting that it was not assumed then that children would remain in school until the 12th grade, and that simply learning to read and write was then considered sufficient schooling. They are also mistaking the orderliness that used to exist in segregated and thoroughly authoritarian all-Negro schools for a true learning experience. The statistics belie these claims, and we know that the quiet, passive, orderly Negro children were in fact learning almost nothing. But in such environments teachers also appeared less mean and less hostile. And because they were rarely confronted with the anger or rebelliousness of the black student, they were probably less aware of their own biases. Because prejudice was built into the system openly, the teacher's own prejudice could be more disguised.

• A third myth believed by urban Negroes and Puerto Ricans is that only those of color are deprived of an adequate education. Like my own children, raised in urban interracial neighborhoods where the poor were always black, they basically disbelieve the claim that there are many more poor whites than poor Negroes in America, and that these poor whites are equally powerless and handicapped in school. (It is probably true, however, that poor blacks are more sensitive

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to educational failure and more motivated to change it.)

• The fourth myth involves a belief in the omnipotence of American know-how and the complicity of all whites in the "power structure." It is assumed that all whites have access to fairly unlimited power and could, if they chose, do almost anything with it. And teaching seems a simple skill compared to some others white America has conquered. The failure of teachers, most of whom are white, is thus explicable only as a conscious decision not to let black children learn: the "ins" run schools so that they and their kind alone will learn; despised minorities in the past succeeded only when they took over the system and saw to it that teachers didn't get away with not teaching or replaced the "in" teachers with others of their own ethnic background; only when blacks "take over" can the current conspiracy be foiled.

How is this conspiracy *now* carried out? The logical, simple, "scientific" explanation is easy to see. What, after all, is learning anyway? It's absorbing information and remembering it. If one is made to listen, if one is told true facts, if one is forced to repeat such facts and frequently tested on them, then learning must occur. If learning is not occuring, it follows that the teachers must either not make children listen, or not be telling them the truth, or refusing to make them repeat the correct answers, or failing to test them often enough. Or, if all these techniques fail, the teacher is causing the children to be disruptive so that they can be kicked out altogether.

MOTHER AFTER MOTHER got up that hot September night on the West Side of Manhattan and repeated bits and pieces of these myths. And the more I heard, the less I felt able to refute. In a world in which the hypocrisy of men in authority seems increasingly clear, it is certainly fitting that those with the most to be angry at should revert to the simplest beliefs about society, history, and the nature of education—beliefs easily understood and resting not on magical thinking but on simple assumptions about cause-and-effect.

I realized that in one form or another I had been hearing these theories for almost a year—ever since I moved to New York City—at one hysterical meeting after another. They were expressed in more traditional "Marxist" terminology by the Progressive Labor party in a pamphlet widely distributed in the ghetto: "We Must Rule the Schools." It says, simply, "The rich ruling class wants SERVICE . . . unthinking workers who will be forced to work in low-pay jobs. They want soldiers. They don't want to give our boys and girls good schooling." While the PLP may, for Marxistic reasons, partially exempt workers and union teachers from this conspiracy and place the blame on some abstract "capitalists," the parents transpose this explanation into more concrete personal experience with teachers.

It was this approach that made the parents shout with approval when one white leader of EQUAL said: "Once we go into the schools during the strike we will take over the classes; it will be *us* who will be in charge when that teacher decides to come back. And let them try to get us out! We'll stay and we'll see that they teach!" When I asked her afterward whether she expected any good teacher could be effective in such a parent-run classroom, subjected to such humiliating working conditions, she answered, "Why not? Is there something wrong with working for these parents? Aren't they good enough for the teachers? If the parents were middle-class, would the teachers be so horrified? The parents won't be doing the teaching, after all; we know we need experts for that. The parent's job is just telling the teacher when and what to teach—the how is up to her." Mothers in Westchester and Queens and mothers in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

private schools, she claimed, already are doing just this.

What the parents in the slums fail to realize is that parents in good suburban schools (of course there are bad ones run according to this EQUAL mother's fantasy) know how to organize schools so that professionals, in fact, have very great freedom. Because the professionals respect the general range of social values that are part of their students' world and succeed in producing students who succeed in that world, there is not the same distrust of professionalism and professional power.

The dispute over decentralization reflects the same mythology. "We must use our children as a whip to crack over the heads of professionals," said a sober statement passed without protest by a well-attended meeting of the West Side Committee for Decentralization. The rest of the statement denounced all the fancy explanations for learning failure and placed responsibility where "it belonged": on teachers. Speaker after speaker got up to expand upon the statement's denunciation of the UFT on the issue of "disruptive children." They declared with certainty that there were no disruptive children, "just disruptive teachers." No psychologists, guidance workers, or social workers are needed in our schools, said EQUAL chairman Rosalie Stutz (who had some otherwise perceptive things to say about the schools). Just teach them to read and stop psychologizing them, she declared. Psychological problems do not handicap learning, they are merely the result of bad teaching. Children who know how to read and write properly (which she also tends to see as the only proper function of the school) will not cause trouble. (And, of course, it is undeniable that the failure of ghetto schools to teach and the anger, chaos, and bias present in such schools does harm children psychologically.)

Manhattan's West Side, Bedford-Stuyvesant, East Harlem, Central Harlem—all were rife in September with new *ad hoc* organizations, formed to represent parents and the community and organized around anti-teacher and pro-decentralization slogans. The names of the leaders were often familiar and the same ones popped up many times over. A United Federation of Parents was organized by Rev. Milton Galamison for the express purpose of keeping an eye on teachers and textbooks. Most were paper groups, lasting only for a meeting or two, producing new steering committees, resolutions, and press releases. But in shouting out that something is rotten in our school system, they spoke, I felt sure, for something deeply felt in Harlem, Spanish Harlem, and even in anxious, increasingly suspicious middle-class communities.

The night before the strike began all of this seemed crystal clear and inescapably sensible to me. I dreaded going to central Harlem where I taught and where I would be easily identifiable as a teacher (white women in Harlem are generally either teachers or social workers). While I wholeheartedly supported the UFT and felt proud of the teachers for going out on non-wage demands, their position seemed impossible to communicate to the people who most needed just what the UFT was demanding.

YET WHEN I CAME TO LENOX AVENUE to join my picket line, I found a normal atmosphere, the same casual friendliness or indifference of past years, neither more intense nor more angry, although more confused.

And the relationships I developed with the parents of my students had never begun more favorably. When I called upon parents for help in arranging an emergency program, I got my share of evasively pleasant and polite answers—"anything you say, teacher." As I talked on the phone I heard, in one case, some abusive remarks in the background about where teachers belonged, while the mother politely assured me she

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was all for the teachers and the Union. But during the next three weeks, as our program got under way, many parents worked with me; they spent time and money helping the class, in a way I had never before experienced.

My students come mostly from families on welfare, yet several parents offered financial assistance during the strike. While on the picket line, while riding in Harlem subways, while walking down Lenox Avenue to school, I saw no angry looks, heard no angry words. I spent three weeks walking the streets with children—bringing them to and from their homes, playing with them in various parks, and visiting area stores—and there were no incidents. Many who remembered me from the year before greeted me warmly. The cluster of unemployed men on the corner of Lenox Avenue engaged in their usual passing comments: "How're the kids behaving today?" "If they get out of line, just tell me." "How about teaching *me* to read?" It was no different this year, although it was clear I was a teacher on strike. And my experience was not unique or based on a special personal reputation. It was the experience of most of the teachers at my school and most of those I knew who worked in Harlem. There were of course a number of well-publicized exceptions, in places such as IS 201.

Despite all the claims about how the parents were going to man the schools and begin their "take-over" during the strike, few black volunteers showed up. (Anti-union efforts in conservative white neighborhoods also had difficulty producing volunteer scabs on any regular basis.) Most of the volunteers who did show up were not black militants but appeared to be the usual middle-class Harlem ladies who thought all strikes a disgrace, or retired teachers who believed striking was "unprofessional." Most of the parents shied away from *all* trouble, routinely condemning all parties concerned. The majority, for example, did not take advantage of the Emergency or Freedom Schools set up by the union teachers, but neither did they send their children to the regular schools unless desperate for baby-sitting.

While antiwhite feeling in Harlem is surely on the increase and probably no Negro is immune from it, still it was the parents at Harlem's PS 175, and not the Board of Education, the UFT, or the white principal, who decided that Ralph Poynter and his able promoter Queen Mother Moore (one of the newly fashionable spokesmen for black power—a witty, perceptive, oratorically skilled evangelist) did not represent

A Special Money-Saving Offer

A DISSENT Subscription
and
LID MEMBERSHIP

$10.00 per year

This entitles you to a year's worth of DISSENT plus the LID pamphlet service, a series of publications the LID sends out without cost to its members. The $10 joint offer represents a saving of $2.50 and is also a way of supporting two major institutions of the "Democratic Left." *Please mail to*:

League for Industrial Democracy
112 East 19 Street
New York, N.Y. 10003

☐ Enclosed please find $10 for a year's membership in the LID and a year's subscription to DISSENT

☐ Please send me more information about the LID.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY.....

STATE.....ZIP.....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them. It was they who roundly repudiated Poynter's attempt to take over the school in behalf of black parent power and black male power. They voted him out of his self-appointed principalship (which the TV cameras helped promote) and reappointed the white principal.

Despite the furor at IS 201, the parents at 201 and its four feeder schools were not often heard from or seen. They were not the ones who shoved and kicked other parents or threatened teachers. They remained in the background, uneasy, frightened, sometimes protesting, and perhaps sometimes vicariously pleased at the actions of the black nationalists. Even months later, however, when the much-publicized elections for the governing board of IS 201 were held, less than a third of the 1,200 parents from the five schools who had registered to vote actually did so.

While the West Side Committee for Decentralization—an amalgam of black and Puerto Rican nationalists, just plain angry parents, and more moderate school "reformers"—held meetings of hundreds in September, today its meetings are poorly attended. A few months ago the attendance was primarily Negro and Puerto Rican; today it is mostly the white middle-class parents who still show up and vie among themselves for the support of the few nonwhites present (who in confusion often drift away altogether).

The mothers who were so angry in September are no doubt still unhappy. But for them the concerns of daily life must take priority, and bitterness that leads to no immediate change in the scenery of life cannot long be sustained at fever pitch.

The average parent in Harlem remains inactive in regard to school issues and if he becomes active, it is still in the more traditional Parent Associations which, despite poor participation, probably involve more parents than all the black-power groups combined. The average PA meeting is a quiet and ineffective affair indeed, with desperate PA presidents trying to produce life, stir discussion, get new parents to volunteer for office, hold cake sales and arrange for class pictures, organize polite luncheons for the teachers, get along with principals, and occasionally to agitate on some issue.

Principals in Harlem now are more tense and teachers more wary. They feel that parents are more likely than in the past to raise a fuss if a child claims to have been hit or pushed, if children are not getting enough homework, if a fight breaks out in the school yard, if the teacher is not sending home the proper change from the milk money, if a child is transferred to another class or placed in a special program without properly notifying the parents, or, of course, if children are suspended from school.

WHILE THE MAJORITY OF PARENTS in Harlem repudiated their more militant leaders by not volunteering as scabs and by maintaining a semi-friendly or neutral posture toward the teachers, it would be a mistake to assume that the hostile response was symptomatic only of a mad minority or that it is a put-up job of "outside agitators."

There were moments those first few weeks of school when I did wonder whether I had been completely fooled and deceived by those hysterical parents at hysterical meetings. The parents I knew personally seemed so reasonable and communicative. But I soon concluded that the hysteria was not unrepresentative of parent attitudes even at my seemingly calm school.

For some of my friendliest parents responded with approval, nodding their heads and adding their own points, to stories repeated to them about those angry speeches of the EQUAL and CORE leaders. They sometimes smiled in open pleasure at the anti-teacher denunciations, even as they added their own qualifiers. They were almost totally confused about the ruckus going on at IS 201, but they were clearly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

open to believing the worst about the school system. The angry leaders speak, I believe, to something deep within all Harlem parents —those whose anger runs over into a kind of desperate paranoia, and those whose "sense of proportion" prevents them from rude behavior, who still want to "get along," whether from apathy or hope.

The feelings of the extremists are, I believe, shared by the vast majority. The vast majority is merely unwilling or unable to deal with life on these extreme and frightening terms.

Part of this I knew from years of teaching in ghetto schools in New York and Chicago. Like most teachers I remember how shocked I was at first when parents would tell me that I had their permission to beat their child for the slightest infraction. Still others, too intimidated themselves to enter the school, would nevertheless "support" the teachers by harshly punishing their children if the teacher sent home a disapproving note. Few parents ever seemed to listen to their own child's version of school life. They turned a deaf ear, it seemed to me, to the legitimate anxieties, fears, and defeats that their children daily underwent in our school system. What they seemed to tell their children was:

> Don't come to me for support. Don't complain to me about injustice. Don't expect me to appeal your case to any higher authorities. I don't like or trust them myself. But if I responded to my likes and dislikes, I'd have to tear this world apart. All that would accomplish would be to endanger you and myself without the slightest chance of changing things for the better. The white folks have the power; the teachers represent them. Learn what you can from them, pick up any tricks they can teach you. Stay in line and at all costs, avoid trouble. If trouble comes, you are always wrong. That's what life is all about. If the school teaches you only that, it's worth it and you might as well learn it young when the penalties for making a mistake are less severe.

This may have been an apt approach to coping with survival in the South, even though its psychological and intellectual toll was incalculable. But times have changed. The penalties are less murderous. Yesterday's children are today's parents. And they grew up not in the South but in the North where such an attitude can be disastrous.

There appear to be three general responses to the ghetto school problem. There are those who remain passive, motivated by the old fear of trouble. Underneath they may identify with the anger, but many are probably unable to express it even to themselves and have buried their rage beneath an apathetic view of life. A second group can no longer bear to see another generation destroyed. But they have been embittered, if not altogether shattered, by the present collapse of the nonviolent integrationist movement. If that beautiful new world we used to sing about cannot be created, at least they are determined that those who have made them and their children suffer will henceforth suffer too. No longer will only black people be humiliated in our schools—let teachers experience a little humiliation too. Still many others, sometimes confused with the passive, at other times with the "extremists," are parents who cling to hope and cannot, at least as yet, accept mere vengeance. While they do not dissociate themselves from the black-power extremists, they are still "victims" of a hope that something less than complete destruction might suffice. Their desire for a less racially bitter world for their youngsters makes them willing to work *with* their children's teachers in order to produce a better school system.

The attempt neatly to define who is who and which group is bigger or smaller is probably impossible and even useless. What the UFT does, what white Americans do, and what the city and federal government decide the next few years will be decisive in pushing black parents one way or another.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ben B. Seligman

The Poverty of Aging

AMERICANS ARE PROUD of the fact that the nation is becoming young. Nearly half the population is now under 25 years of age and about a third under 15. While this may mean crowded colleges or teen-age unemployment, the problems of *senior* citizens, who are increasing in numbers, do not diminish because older people become a smaller portion of the population. In fact, in an industrial society the position of the aged tends to worsen. The long-run decline in death rates, signifying greater longevity, coupled with the inability of older persons to compete for jobs, makes the problem of the aged more visible, despite a desire on the part of the rest of us to push them out of sight and out of mind.

The final stages of human existence can be a protracted period of human obsolescence. As in so many other societies, we would prefer simply to discard our aged. While we do not burn the villages of the aged dead, or fill the air with cries of joy over the departed,[1] we do stuff our aged into institutions to let them await death slowly. There they are given care of a sort. Unfortunately, as Jules Henry has revealed, such care is of the order that might be accorded to an inanimate object.[2] Often, the names of the inmates are not known to the staff that takes care of them. Institutions for the aged are likely to be tombs for those still alive, and as in a tomb, silence prevails.

A resident of an old-age home must foster the illusion that he is among the living, although awareness that he has been discarded by relatives, friends, and society is not uncommon. In some private profit-making homes, the inmates ". . . suffer most from [a] sense of being dumped and lost; [from] the . . . vacant routine, the awareness of being considered a nuisance and of being inferior to the most insensitive employee."[3] Soon ordinary human functions are distorted, so that the resident of an old-age institution undergoes a "pathogenic metamorphosis" akin to that experienced by characters in the tales of Franz Kafka. If he reaches pathetically for reality, the inmate is apt to be rebuffed by a staff member: the latter do not want reality, for the transformation of their charges is the only reality available to *them*. Ordinary human dignity would represent too serious a challenge to the apparatus of the institution, the main purpose of which is to create hopelessness. When this has been achieved, persons of sound mind and body can then withdraw from the aged without qualms of conscience. The sense of doom that the aged suffer hastens their passage through the vestibule to death.[4]

THE AGED MAY BE among us, but they are not part of us. The aged are simply an embarrassment. They are poor, unable to provide medical care for themselves: they vio-

---

This, article is from the forthcoming book Permanent Poverty: An American Syndrome, *to be published by Quadrangle Books of Chicago,*
© 1968, by Ben B. Seligman.

[1] *Cf.* J. Campbell, *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology*, New York, 1959, p. 118 ff.

[2] J. Henry, *Culture Against Man*, New York, 1963, p. 391 ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 407.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 437.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

late the canon of self-help, and so we dishonor them. Irving Rosow has demonstrated that a secure position for the aged can exist only under conditions that cannot be found in a modern industrial society. If the aged owned or controlled property on which younger persons depended, if they were transmitters of culture, in possession of key blocks of knowledge, if they provided significant links to the past, if the extended family were still central to our mode of life, if our society were tradition-oriented, and if the output of the aged were in any way economically useful, then they would still be honored.[5]

An older person has a chance for a fruitful existence if he is married and living with his spouse, but many of those over 65 years of age have no spouse, and widowhood increases with age at the rate of 20 per cent with each decade after 65. An old person has a chance if he is still at work, but most of the aged do not work. Today only a third of persons 65 years of age or older are in the work force, as contrasted with two-thirds at the turn of the century. Escape from poverty and hopelessness is possible if there is no loss of income, but the data show a drop of as much as 50 per cent in income after retirement. Life might be meaningful if one's health were good, but most of the aged suffer from a large assortment of illnesses. Says Rosow, the chances of a man over 65 having a favorable rating on all four counts is seven in a hundred, for a woman 65, one in a hundred.[6]

To be sure, there has been some improvement in institutional homes in recent years. The recognition that the aged need to have a choice in living arrangements has been growing, and some better homes have been provided by religious denominations and fraternal organizations. The private proprietary institutions, though they are proliferating, rarely set up responsible lay boards to review both policy and day-to-day operations. With social security payments as a base, the aged poor can turn to private services when no others are available; yet few of these institutions tie their services to a medical care system or rehabilitation effort that would minimize the "disuse syndrome" among their clients. In the final analysis, proprietary homes are commercial enterprises and generally isolated from community health services.[7]

Living with relatives has not been a viable solution either. In one study two-thirds of the persons interviewed were opposed to having aged parents live with their children.[8] It was evident that little contact or understanding between the generations existed. Only 13 per cent of the respondents in this study saw virtue in some semblance of an extended family. The higher the educational level, the more undesirable did joint living appear to be: educated persons were less likely to provide a home for their older relatives. A similar attitude prevailed among the aged: older persons with incomes of at least $5000 a year expressed preferences for separate domiciles. And older persons in states that provide higher Old Age Assistance appear to live alone more frequently than in states where OAA is minimal.

HOW DIFFICULT LIVING ALONE must be is underscored by the income data for the aged. The largest proportion of aged married couples—79 per cent—derive their income from social security payments. Other government retirement programs, such as railroad retirement systems, provide income for 12 per cent, while private retirement schemes lend support to 16 per cent.[9] Earn-

[5] I. Rosow, "And Then We Were Old," *Transaction*, Jan.–Feb. 1965. p. 21
[6] Rosow, *ibid.*, p. 25.
[7] Senate Committee on Aging, *Developments in Aging: 1959 to 1963*, Washington, 1963; *New York Times*, July 19, 1966.
[8] J. N. Morgan, *et. al., Income and Welfare in the United States*, New York, 1962, p. 158, ff.
[9] L. S. Epstein, "Income of the Aged in 1962: First Findings of the 1963 Survey of the Aged," *Social Security Bulletin*, March 1964.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ings were a source of income for somewhat more than half the aged couples. For the non-married aged this ratio dropped to 24 per cent. More important is the size of the income: the median for married couples was $2875; for non-married persons, $1130. Almost all of the latter had incomes under $3000 a year: this was also true for 54 per cent of the married couples. Set against the standards of "modest but adequate" budgets, these data suggest that at least 2 million couples and 6 million unmarried aged are in dire straits.

It is often argued that older persons do not need as much as younger ones, because the aged spend less for clothing, housing, food, and medicine. But as Harold Sheppard has said, this reflects a curious reversal of logic, since the aged spend less only because they have less.[10] The patent fact is that those aged who do not sustain a loss in income do consume as much as anyone else in their income level. No doubt, the aged would be worse off were there no social security payments. Yet a large percentage of social security beneficiaries still require public assistance, mainly because the benefits are too small to maintain them at even low levels of existence.

Families headed by older persons represent one-third of all poor families, a ratio substantially higher than the one in seven for the total number of aged in the general population. As we have suggested, the nonmarried are worse off than couples: they tend to be older and poorer, so that one in six requires old-age assistance, as contrasted with one in 12 for the married aged. A large number of social security beneficiaries receive the minimum benefit: women who select "early" retirement get even less.

There may have been some improvement in the income position of the aged in recent years; yet as late as 1962, 5 per cent of aged married couples and 44 per cent of aged nonmarried persons had incomes of less than $1000 a year.[11] While the proportion of all families and individuals in dire poverty has decreased since 1900, the proportion of the aged in such circumstances has not decreased markedly.[12] Nor do they have accumulations of savings on which they can fall back. The aged may have homes with mortgages fully paid, some insurance, and some liquid assets; but in 1960, 30 per cent of spending units with heads over 65 years of age had no liquid assets, and 20 per cent had such assets amounting to less than $1000. And more than half the home equities were worth less than $10,000. Liquid assets are not available for the usual emergencies that afflict the aged.

THERE HAVE BEEN IMPROVEMENTS, of course, in the last few years. Amendments to the Social Security Act have helped, and the beneficiaries now coming onto the rolls with better earnings records than those in past years have added to average benefits. Yet in December, 1964, the average social security payment was $79 a month. At the end of 1964, there were 13.7 million aged persons receiving such benefits; on the average this represented three out of every four aged persons in the nation. In 1965 it was estimated that 35 per cent of all social security recipients were poor and that another 38 per cent would fall below the Social Security Administration's poverty standard in the absence of social security payments.

Of course, social security encourages withdrawal from the work force.[13] The proportion of the aged who work appears to have fallen sharply in recent years, although it is conceivable that illness or changes in attitudes toward retirement may have ac-

[10] H. L. Sheppard, "The Povery of Aging," in B. B. Seligman, *ed., Poverty As a Public Issue,* New York, 1965, p. 98.

[11] H. S. Gordon, "Aging and Income Security," in C. Tibbitts, *ed., Aging and Society,* Chicago, 1960, p. 212.

[12] *Ibid.,* p. 211.

[13] C. D. Long, *The Labor Force Under Changing Income and Employment,* Princeton, 1958, p. 163.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

counted for the decline.[14] Curiously enough, social security is structured in such a manner that the income transfers flow from lower-middle-income groups to lower-income groups, with upper-income groups contributing very little. In effect, support of the poor comes from those quite close to them in the income scale. Further, because of the retirement tests, the law limits beneficiaries in supplementing benefits in any effective fashion. Furthermore, widows must surrender part of their benefits if they marry another beneficiary, leading to "the St. Petersburg sin," couples living together to overcome loneliness, but in an unmarried state.[15]

After some years of agitation, improvements were made in 1965. Monthly cash benefits were increased by 7 per cent, so that the range is now from $44 a month to $136 a month, with the maximum scheduled to rise to $168 a month in future years. The tax base was raised to $6600 a year and the tax rate stepped up to reach 4.85 per cent by 1973. For a family the maximum benefit may reach $368 a month. The retirement test was altered, allowing earnings up to $1500 a year. Benefits were continued for children still in school up to the age of 22. Disability allowances were liberalized and the standards made less restrictive. Widows could receive benefits at the age of 60 on an actuarially reduced basis. These changes do indeed offer some improvements, but whether they will take the aged poor out of poverty remains to be seen. (The foregoing data do not take into account more recent changes in Social Security.)

ALL TOO OFTEN AN AGED PERSON receiving benefits must ask local authorities for additional help. And for the aged poor who do not have recourse to the federal program there is no alternative to Old Age Assistance (OAA). Yet more than half the states fail to make OAA payments sufficient to meet their own income tests. The Senate Committee on Aging noted numerous cases of local agencies reducing their aid when other sources were made available.[16]

As with all forms of public assistance at local levels, OAA is conditioned by the perennial clash between proponents of low taxes and those who express a concern for the poor. Yet assistance to the aged, as well as other categorical forms of aid, has become much too severe a problem to be handled by private charity, as is frequently suggested by low-tax advocates; moreover, the private agencies have developed their own specialized clientele and they are now reluctant to become involved in aid programs rooted in economic distress. They prefer to deal with such matters as family counseling, leaving economic need to public authorities.[17]

So large is the bill for public assistance that on occasion a local authority gives up in frustration and simply closes down its program. When Clermont County in Ohio cut off aid in 1961 because the voters rejected a tax levy for public assistance, the burden was simply shifted to landlords, grocers, doctors, and other agencies. Debt in the county rose 54 per cent in a 15-month period, and evictions increased alarmingly. Clearly, cutting the aged and other needy off the rolls was no solution. But neither does increased aid make the problem disappear. Although survivor's insurance may lighten the widow's burden and help the orphans, no one anticipated that illegitimacy and desertion would in turn crowd the public assistance rolls.

While two-fifths of the total public-assistance burden goes for OAA, its distribution is quite unequal. A higher proportion of the rural aged are reached through OAA than the urban aged. Yet there is no con-

[14] M. Gordon, *The Economics of Welfare Policies*, New York, 1963, p. 35.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[16] Senate Committee on Aging, *op. cit.*, pp. 69–70.
[17] G. Y. Steiner, *Social Insecurity: The Politics of Welfare*, Chicago, 1966, p. 11.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sistent pattern among the states: Louisiana reaches 49 per cent of its aged poor; Delaware only 3 per cent. But this doesn't mean that Delaware's level of aid is munificent—its average monthly payment is $63. In practice, there is no rational economic explanation for the sort of benefits the individual states bestow on their aged poor. Worse yet, the state-run programs are frequently conducted in an irregular manner. Confidentiality requirements may be flouted or recipients classified on some arbitrary basis other than need.[18] The eligibility standards usually mean emotional agony for the recipient who is willing to run a bureaucratic gauntlet to obtain aid. All too often the public agency tends to blame his situation on the client himself.

Recipients, especially those on OAA, cannot influence the level or administration of the programs that serve them. As Gilbert Steiner says, farmers have their lobbyists, publishers express their views on mail subsidy to Congress, and trade associations speak for industry, but the aged—or for that matter, any recipient of public assistance—are not asked what they need. (Some change in this regard is being sought by some civil rights groups.)[19]

ONE MIGHT THINK PRIVATE PENSION BENEFITS would relieve the situation of the aged. In 1960 total payments to retirees from private pensions were about $1.3 billion, four times larger than a decade before. The various plans cover over 20 million workers, or about 43 per cent of the employed private work force, almost double the ratio in 1950. Much progress had been made in ten years. Nevertheless, the income derived from private pensions represented less than 6 per cent of the income of the aged. And most of the recipients could be classified as "higher-income aged." Less than 3 per cent of social security beneficiaries who receive under $1,200 a year obtain any income from private pension plans.

To rely on private pension income to relieve the condition of the aged poor would be disastrous. Small firms are less apt to have pension arrangements than large ones. Low-wage industries, in which many of the aged poor have spent their working lives, have not instituted pension programs in any widespread fashion. Federal tax regulations are so cumbersome that entrepreneurs in these industries are discouraged from even trying. The most serious problem is the lack of air-tight legal protection for pensioners. Despite some improvement, stemming from the Welfare and Pension Disclosure Act, it is still possible for an employee to discover that he really has no pension. For in the last analysis, the contract is between the employer or trustees and the carrier, and all too often trustees can escape penalties for negligence or misconduct. Many private plans have poor vesting—an absolute right to a pension—or none at all; and in the absence of portability—the transfer of pensions from one company to another—a feature conspicuous by its rarity, workers lose years of accumulated rights when they change jobs.

MEETING HEALTH COSTS is a major problem for the aged. Private insurers could not solve the problem of offering adequate benefits for a high-risk, low-income population, nor were they especially interested in doing so. Despite the American Medical Association's crude effort in 1960 to demonstrate that the aged weren't suffering from sickness and could easily meet their health bills, the fact was that four out of five aged persons had chronic ailments as contrasted with two out of five for younger persons. Mental, as well as physical illness, was a problem for the aged: first admissions in mental hospitals were two-and-a-half times greater than those for patients under 65. The aged stay in hospitals longer; they need more home care and more drugs; they visit

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 84.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 153 ff.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the doctor more often. Set against this record the mounting hospital costs—an increase of 27 per cent between 1960 and 1962—and it is patent that the health problem of the aged has been indeed serious.[20]

The demand for health insurance as part of the social security system grew without abatement. At the eleventh hour, private insurance companies sought to offer plans for aged health coverage within their underwriting perspective, but these were inadequate. They were almost all hospital-oriented and did not deal with other medical needs, i.e., they were not comprehensive. The industry failed to convince anyone—not even itself—that it could do the job. In 1959 hospital insurance coverage for the aged covered 46 per cent of that group as compared with 67 per cent in the total population; surgical coverage was 37 per cent, a little over half of what everyone else had; and only 10 per cent of the aged had insurance for doctors' visits, as contrasted with 19 per cent for the general population. The lower the income, the less coverage: only a third of the aged with incomes under $2,000 a year had hospital insurance.

All too frequently the insurance the aged did have provided lower benefits at higher premiums.[21] Furthermore, the shift from a community rating basis in setting costs to an experience basis tended to force up rates. In any case, the usual commercial coverage offered fixed dollar benefits according to some predetermined schedule rather than in terms of need. And the deductible corridors—that part borne directly by the insured—placed a substantial part of the cost on the policy holder. Ordinary health insurance did not meet more than 7 per cent of the total cost of the aged's health requirements.

Nor did the Kerr-Mills Act in 1960 solve the problem. Admittedly passed as a substitute for health care through the social security system, it asked the states to develop their own medical aid programs for the aged as a condition for obtaining federal grants. Numerous restrictions were instituted—means tests and family responsibility—which severely limited coverage. The administrative costs were inordinately high. Moreover, since most of the states had failed to provide even adequate general assistance to the aged, it was unlikely that they would assume the added burden of Kerr-Mills. By 1962 only one in every 200 eligibles was receiving aid through Kerr-Mills. Many refused to utilize the "service" when they discovered that they would have to pauperize themselves. Quite simply, Kerr-Mills was a failure.

IT REMAINED FOR MEDICARE—medical aid through social security—to make the first sensible step toward an adequate health scheme for the aged. While Medicare, as passed in 1965, fell short of the original proposals, it was a significant advance, one that took 20 years to achieve. Its impact will probably go far beyond the 10 per cent of the population for whom it has been devised. It is more than likely that private health insurance plans for younger persons will be altered and Medicare will no doubt affect proposals developed through collective bargaining.

In brief, the 1965 amendments to the Social Security Act provide hospital and medical insurance for beneficiaries. The hospital plan is financed by a separate earnings tax and separate fund. Enrollment in the medical plan is voluntary, paid for by a monthly premium of $3 to be matched by the federal government. Benefits include a maximum of 90 days hospitalization for each illness, post-hospital extended care for 100 days, and outpatient diagnostic services. The law also stresses the need for community health planning.

Opponents apparently have accepted Medicare as a *fait accompli,* and indeed are getting on the bandwagon. Medical practitioners

[20] Senate Committee on Aging, *op. cit., passim.*
[21] *Ibid.,* p. 15.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are helping the government to set up the necessary standards, and the AMA, after spending almost $1 million in the first three months of 1965 to forestall the passage of Medicare, is now urging its members to cooperate. Nevertheless, it was reported that some 20,000 physicians have decided not to participate. Private insurance companies, on the other hand, are cooperating. No doubt, it was their influence that resulted in all of Medicare's deductible corridors, for these allow dove-tailing private plans with government plans. There is still some business they hope to get. A query remains: will not those aged who do not buy private "dovetailed" policies continue to suffer a financial burden by virtue of the deductible corridors?

It was predicted that Medicare would enforce vast changes in hospital administration. Fees for some services provided by hospitals would be raised; the prices of other services would be reduced. Thus, charges for rooms, x-rays, and medicines were expected to fall, whereas service costs for obstetrics and pediatrics might increase. New arrangements might be worked out for staff doctors, and it was hoped that Medicare would speed up integration in Southern hospitals. In any case, it was expected that the aged of the nation would flock into the 7,200 hospitals across the country and overtax already limited facilities. No one thought that the deductible corridors would provide some restraint.[22]

MOST OBSERVERS OVERLOOKED MEDICAID—Title 19 of the 1965 amendments to the Social Security Act—while plans for Medicare were being formulated. Unnoticed for months, attention was called to Title 19 when New York State took advantage of its provisions by adopting enabling legislation in April, 1966. This amendment is a liberalized and expanded version of the 1960 Kerr-Mills law. Financed by general revenues, not through social security, it provides for certain kinds of health care for the aged poor, but on a broader scale than Kerr-Mills. In fact, Title 19, sponsored by Rep. Wilbur Mills, offers benefits through matching grants to the disabled, ADC families, and to those who may have enough for other needs, but not for medical care. In effect, funds would be made available to all medically needy persons under 21 and over 60 and to the blind or disabled and ADC cases between those ages. By mid-1966 seven states had obtained approval for their programs and a number of others have applied for approval. It was expected that Medicaid would eventually reach some 35 million people. The initial cost to the federal government was expected to be more than $350 million. Quite significant too was the marked easing of eligibility rules, residence requirements, and family responsibility regulations. Further, there was a prospect that some of the deductible corridors under Medicare would be covered.

When it was suddenly realized that New York's plan alone would cost over a billion dollars a year in combined federal, state, and local payments, the legislators in Washington were stunned. They hurriedly tried to amend the law, but it seemed too late—the welfare state had barged through the cautious legislative barriers with a resounding crash. For the members of Congress had left the definition of "medically indigent" up to the states, and some of the latter were prepared to be as liberal as New York has been. Under the latter's program up to 40 per cent of its inhabitants could qualify for Medicaid. Moreover, the states were not permitted to substitute Medicaid for existing welfare programs in order to prevent new federal monies from paying for old state welfare programs, thus encouraging liberality.

Senators and congressmen were chagrined at their extraordinary *faux pas* and tried to scale down the generous program. Yet by

[22] *New York Times*, May 29, 1966, June 13, 1966, and June 19, 1966; *Wall Street Journal*, June 15, 1966; *Baltimore Sun*, Dec. 21, 1965.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

October, 1966 some 41 states and Puerto Rico had taken advantage of Title 19. Although most of the state plans were modest, California and Massachusetts had devised fairly ambitious ones, and their representatives in Washington made it known that they would not tolerate any changes in the law. Congress proposed to bar able-bodied adults whose children were receiving assistance under other welfare programs, but the income standards were still open for aid to such adults. Only $80 million would be cut from the estimated half-billion-dollar federal cost in the year beginning July, 1967: the original estimate for federal contributions had been $238 million a year. It was feared that Washington's Medicaid bill would reach $2 billion annually.[23]

For all these improvements, social security remained inadequate. It was clear that much still had to be done if the country was to catch up with standards elsewhere in the West. One problem was the erosion that resulted as prices continued their upward drift. Somehow social security benefits would have to be tied to a "cost of living" formula if the retired were not to lose ground. It was obvious too that the structure of social security taxes, which provided the "trust fund," could not be expected to do the whole job. Sentiment increased for recourse to the general revenues, although a sharp increase in the tax base—perhaps up to $15,000 a year—was not unthinkable. It has been argued that the steep increase in payroll taxes that this entailed would generate resistance, and discourage firms from increasing their work force because of rising costs. Further, no matter what the base limit, a payroll tax remains regressive: with the present $6,600 limit, those receiving income under this figure pay proportionately more than those whose income exceeds $6,600 a year. The prospect seems to be that social security benefits will come less and less from direct contributions to a special fund.

THE AGED NEED DECENT HOUSING as well as adequate income, yet the limitations from which they suffer in income impose severe restrictions on what they can purchase in shelter. This was underscored by the Senate Committee on Aging in 1962, and despite existing legislation little genuine progress has been made. Local housing authorities have available certain instrumentalities under the Housing Act to allow the construction of special facilities for the aged: by the end of 1962 about 8,000 such units had been built. New rental housing for the aged can be supplied through government-insured mortgages: by 1962, about 26,000 units had been built. Direct loans are also available to non-profit organizations sponsoring housing for the aged: by 1962, about 8,800 such units had been constructed. It seems obvious that these programs have provided a tiny fraction of the need.

Even in the one agency primarily concerned with poverty—the Office of Economic Opportunity—the aged have been relegated to secondary status. For months during 1965–1966 a bureaucratic battle raged in OEO on whether the aged poor should become a prime target group or remain a minor concern of the agency. Budgeting outlays in OEO through 1966 for the aged were about 2 per cent of the total. Said some bureaucrats in justification of the policy: "We're a youth-oriented nation." Yet Congress made it clear in 1965 that OEO was to consider the special problems of the aged "wherever possible." The only program for the aged to which OEO gave any priority was "Medicare Alert," under which older persons were given temporary jobs at $1.25 an hour to brief other aged on the benefits available under Medicare. Their job was done by March 31, 1966, the deadline for registering for Medicare. While

[23] *New York Times*, May 29, 1966; *National Observer*, June 20, 1966; *Boston Globe*, June 5, 1966; *Wall Street Journal*, July 11, 1966, and October 20, 1966; *Business Week*, June 25, 1966.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

President Johnson specified in August, 1965, a many-sided crash program for the aged poor, only one of these, "Foster Grandparents," a program to train older persons to serve as "substitute parents" for neglected children, was in operation six months later. The program was small in scale, employing about 1200 elderly persons in March, 1966; in the meantime, OEO's original allotment for this venture was cut back from $10 million to $5.5 million; and total OEO funds for aged programs were cut in half.

YET THERE ARE NUMEROUS SERVICES the aged could be trained to perform—library assistants, recreation aides, school crossing guards, toll collectors, helpers to shut-in persons, and subprofessional social workers are just a few. The cost-benefit philosophy that had begun to infect many federal agencies, however, impelled some OEO officials to question the pay-off of investment in the aged. The brutalizing habits of the larger society seemed to have undermined what would appear to be the moral obligations of an agency concerned with poverty.

The outstanding feature of such an effort as "Foster Grandparents" was the remarkable reliability and sense of responsibility of the participants. After eight months one could detect no demonstration, no dropouts, no absenteeism in the project. While the lives of hundreds of rejected children were brightened for a brief time, a sizable group of aged men and women, all poor, were given a new interest in life. Even congressmen who had expressed some doubts were pleasantly surprised at the results. Some children's institutions were horrified at the prospect of "caring" for older persons in addition to what they had to do: within weeks of the inception of the program they were asking for more "foster grandparents."

If one suggests an utter failure of imagination on the part of OEO in dealing with the aged, he would not be far from the truth. All Sargent Shriver could do was to tell a Senate Committee that little could be done for the aged: older persons, said Shriver, have low educational levels, are in poor health, and cannot compete for jobs. Besides, it was more difficult to get local communities excited about the aged poor. Other agencies, insisted Shriver, had a greater responsibility for the aged; OEO could at best play a minor role. The only way to help the aged seemed to be direct cash benefits. Perhaps in *our* society this may be the only way—give the aged poor money and let them stand aside, silent and unseen.[24]

[24] *New York Times*, Dec. 22, 1965, and Jan. 20, 1966; *Washington Post*, May 13, 1965, and Jan. 20, 1966; *Chicago Tribune*, May 1, 1966; *National Observer*, March 7, 1966.

APORTES

Revista trimestral de ciencias sociales publicada por el ILARI

Director: *Luis Mercier Vega*

Número 7

Estados Unidos no es modelo para América Latina .....*Fernando Guillén Martínez*
Hacia la nacionalidad: el caso andino .....*Héctor Martínez*
Migraciones de chilenos en Argentina .....*Lelio Mármora*
La aristocracia en el poder .....*Juan Carlos Agulla*
Estudante e política no Brasil .....*Marialice M. Foracchi*
Formación de las actitudes políticas: Guatemala .....*Peter A. R. Calvert*

Inventario de los estudios en ciencias sociales sobre América Latina

Redacción: Instituto Latinoamericano de Relaciones Internacionales
23, rue de la Pépinière, Paris 8°
Suscripción anual: 4 dólares US

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lionel Abel

Important Nonsense: Norman Brown

To an audience of Parisians, in 1950, Bertrand Russell insisted that the philosophy of Hegel (which he had always said he could not understand) was responsible for German fascism: it was Hegel, not Gobineau, Haeckel, or Stewart Chamberlain who had fathered Hitler. The French, among whom there were not a few philosophers, were by no means delighted—the works of Hippolyte and Kojève on Hegel were then enjoying a vogue in Paris—and when the time for questioning Russell came, Aimée Patri asked him: "Aren't you making philosophy much too important?" To which Russell responded: "No, for I've been talking about bad philosophy. One can't overrate the power of nonsense."

The incident is interesting, not because of Russell's extreme charge against Hegel, which he might not have maintained in a full discussion, but because of his reply to M. Patri, which at once made a point with the Parisians. It is bad philosophy which has influence, this was the gist of Russell's answer, and it elicited from Alexandre Koyré the remark: "Now there's wisdom from a philosopher!"

Russell's "wisdom" amounted to this suggestion: confronted with an idea which has gained great influence, our first thought should not be that since it has become important there must be something to it; we should, on the contrary, think: since it has become so important, it might well be nonsense.

Important nonsense: I propose this rubric to cover many of the general ideas which have swept unresisted across our epoch, and which, since they are nonsensical, ought to be destroyed. To be sure, this is easier said than done, and not because it is difficult to find inconsistencies in such ideas, but because they often gain assent through their very inconsistencies. So the would-be critic has to be aware from the start that his weapons may very well prove inadequate; the intellectual wounds inflicted on the monsters of the nonsensical may make them dearer and more cherished. Thus the temptation to ignore them becomes almost overwhelming. One thinks: they can't last forever—they must die of the very paradoxes which have bemused and fascinated the many, and to which they owe their prominence. But, on the other hand, if the enemy is so strong, will not the struggle have excitement? That the odds are in his favor makes it the more sporting to engage him. There will of course be difficulty in dispatching him. But this should more than make up for the too great facility with which he can be hurt.

But is there someone to be challenged first? One hardly knows with whom to begin. There are so many braggart forms of nonsense—each with its champion. Why even speculate on the adversary's importance, no doubt relative any way? Wouldn't it be best to engage the very latest-comer one's glance has fallen on?

Mine has fallen on Norman O. Brown. This was partly due to accident, for I had not looked into his *Life Against Death* and had not even noticed how many there are who swear by it. But I was sent his second book, *Love's Body*, to review, was shocked by its contents, surprised even that it could find a publisher and readers, and impelled by my desire to understand its vogue to read Mr. Brown's earlier work. In any case, I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

am content with my choice. Mr. Brown's doctrine, as expressed in *Life Against Death*, is utterly nonsensical; and its appeal, which my aim must be to blight or at least diminish, can only lie, as far as I can see, in its very nonsensicality.

FIRST, A LOOK AT LOVE'S BODY. This is a work calculated to mystify anyone who has not read Mr. Brown's earlier work. It is a series of gnomic utterances and outcries supplemented by quotations from philosophers, poets, and scientists, among others, Augustine, Nietzsche, Swift, Ferenzci, Blake, Roheim, Freud. And the famous authors are cited in such a way as to make it seem that Mr. Brown's outcries and utterances are continuations of statements made by them, or contrariwise, that their statements are continuations of Mr. Brown's utterances and outcries. For example, to the following passage, which I quote in its entirety, there is a note indicating that its contents relate to statements in Roheim's *Magic and Schizophrenia*, and page 83 of that work is indicated. But without quotation marks in the passage, one cannot know what is said by Roheim, what by Mr. Brown.

> Psychoanalysis began as a further advance of civilized [scientific] objectivity; to expose remnants of primitive participation, to eliminate them; studying the world of dreams, of primitive magic, of madness, but not participating in dreams or magic, or madness. But the outcome of psychoanalysis is the discovery that magic and madness are everywhere, and dreams is what we are made of. The goal cannot be the elimination of magical thinking, or madness; the goal can only be conscious magic, or conscious madness; conscious mastery of these fires. And dreaming while awake.

And the following passage is referred in a note to Jean-Paul Sartre's *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*:

> All flesh shall see it together. Apocalypse is the dissolution of the group as numerical series, as in representative democracy, and its replacement by the group as fusion, as communion. As in totemism, we participate in each other as we participate in the object.

Now the sense of this passage has nothing whatever in common with anything said by Sartre himself in his still untranslated work. Mr. Brown has simply lifted Sartre's clear concept of "the group in fusion," and altered it to read "group as fusion," in order to merge it, I suggest, with his own utterances about communion, totemism, apocalypse. No directly quoted statement of Sartre's would serve this purpose.

Sometimes Mr. Brown achieves the effect of merging his own notions with what has been said by others by this very simple method of referring to statements made by others without direct quotations. But he also relies on a more subtle and even more confusing procedure, using quotation marks to defeat the purpose for which these marks are intended. That is to say, to prevent the reader from making any clear separation between what Mr. Brown is saying and what was said by others. Here is an example:

> The original mistake in every sentence: metaphor. Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; "the presentation of facts of one category in the idiom appropriate to another." The original sentence, the original metaphor: *Tat Tvam Asi*, Thou art that; or *hoc est corpus meum*, this is my body. Making this thing other: "We already and first of all discern him making this thing other." Metaphor is mistake or impropriety; a *faux pas*, or slip of the tongue; a little madness; *petit mal*; a little seizure or inspiration.

IT WILL BE SEEN that there are two statements here given between quotation marks; but in a note to the passage authorship is referred to *three* different writers: Ryle, Jones, and Aristotle. The effect of all this is calculated to make the reader suppose that Jones, Aristotle, and Ryle, or Aristotle, Ryle, and Jones, or maybe Ryle, Jones, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Aristotle said the same thing as Mr. Brown. In fact, Mr. Brown carries this procedure to such a point that it is as if his own words and the words of others were summed up in each of his utterances, forming a single word, uttered perhaps, by all of them. It will be remembered that Mallarmé thought all the words of a poem should have the effect of just one word.

This might make one think that Mr. Brown's method of merging the statements of others with what he himself is saying has an aesthetic or poetical purpose. Perhaps. He does, however, have another purpose in view and this purpose he has articulated clearly in his provocative praise of schizophrenia:

> It is not schizophrenia but normality that is split-minded; in schizophrenia the false boundaries are disintegrating. "From pathology we have come to know a large number of states in which the boundary lines between ego and outside world become uncertain." Schizophrenics are suffering from the truth. "'Every one knows' the patient's thoughts: a regression to a stage before the first lie." Schizophrenia testifies to "experiences in which the discrimination between the consciousness of self and the consciousness of the object was entirely suspended, the ego being no longer distinct from the object; and self and the world were fused in an inseparable total complex." Schizophrenic thought is "adualistic"; lack of ego-boundaries makes it impossible to set limits to the process of identification with the environment. The significant world is one of mystical participation; and "indescribable extension of inner sense"; "uncanny feelings of reference"; occult psychosomatic influences and powers; currents of electricity, or sexual attraction—action at a distance.

The significant statement in the above passage is: ". . . in schizophrenia the false boundaries are disintegrated." The author's aim, since he also declares that the truth is with the schizophrenics ("Schizophrenics are suffering from the truth") is clearly to disintegrate the "false boundaries" between what he is trying to say and what Aristotle, Ryle, Jones, Matthew, Luke, Blake, Sartre, Freud have succeeded in saying. The question arises: Are the boundaries between the utterances of Mr. Brown and statements made in the past by other very different-minded writers "false boundaries"? In regarding these boundaries as false, we lose sight of what Aristotle and Freud, for instance, meant to say, and begin to think that their meaning lies in what Mr. Brown means to say. And alas, we do not know what that is. Thus Mr. Brown's praise and advocacy of schizophrenia amounts to an attack on meaning as such, which, if justified, would of course give him the right to destroy, by merging with his own discourse, statements others once have made clearly.

All sorts of matters are treated in *Love's Body*: politics, the apocalypse, love, suffering, animism, orgasm, silence, and death. But it is impossible to determine what Mr. Brown is saying on any of these topics since having distinguished these matters, he merges them even as he merges his statements about them with statements made by others. For example, on the orgasm he writes: "In orgasm, all the splendor and misery of representative government." Elsewhere: "Psychoanalysis shows the sexual organization of the body physical to be a political organization; the body is a body politic." And again: "Genital organization is the tyranny of the genital; or rather, since the body physical, everything is constitutional, let us not say tyranny; monarchy." Also this: "A king is erected, *rex erectus est*. A king is an erection of the body politic."

Now the sense of all this is that the sexual and the political are indistinguishable and cannot be talked about separately. Any effort to do so, in the interest of clarity, can only lead to that kind of "false boundary" which schizophrenics and Mr. Brown, too, refuse to accept. But it is not only sex and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

politics that are wrongly distinguished; any object of our attention, the implication goes, is wrongly distinguished from any other object, and one person is wrongly distinguished from other persons. One cannot talk about any matter in separation from any other matter. One cannot say just one thing at one time; to really speak, one has to say everything—and at once. The very distinguishing of this from that, the procedure of abstraction by which we separate out the various matters we have to be concerned with, the principle of distinction itself, the basis of all learning and creation, with the humble acceptance of our own limitedness and finiteness, this, I take it, is what Mr. Brown in *Love's Body* has set himself not so much to attack directly, as to undermine in his utterances.

All the same, one wonders, why were the various passages in this book not connected into one single sentence, however unintelligible? Why did Mr. Brown finally choose to divide the matter of his book under the headings, "Liberty," "Nature," "Trinity," "Unity," "Person," "Head," "Food," "Fire," "Fraction," "Fulfillment," and "Nothing"? Are these boundaries not false ones, according to Mr. Brown himself? But perhaps they are a concession on his part to those of his readers not yet "suffering from truth," that is to say, to those readers who have not yet reached the heights or the depths—aren't they the same anyway?—of schizophrenia. Mr. Brown writes: "Dionysius, the mad god, breaks down the boundaries, releases the prisoners; abolishes repression; and abolishes the *principium individuationis*, substituting for it the unity of man and the unity of man with nature."

Evidently, from such a work as *Love's Body*, no reader could cull anything like a doctrine or a statement of purpose beyond the purely negative one of denying the distinctiveness of any particular doctrine or any particular statement of purpose. At the outset, I did refer to a doctrine set forth by Mr. Brown, and one which I characterized as nonsensical; but I must grant that it is impossible to make such a characterization of what he has said in *Love's Body*. Now, in his earlier book, *Life Against Death*, there is some attempt at lucidity, the separation of one topic from another, and also a definite criticism of what other writers said on the same matters. Moreover, there is the statement of a doctrine and of a purpose which the doctrine is to serve.

LIFE AGAINST DEATH, subtitled *The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History*, is intended to convince the reader of something, and is cast in the form of an argument which can be followed, comprehended, and judged. It is a speculative work on the philosophy of history, that is to say, instead of retelling any particular series of events in the human past as historians do, it tries to recapitulate or sum up the meaning of all the events we call historical in which men were involved since they appeared on earth. The meaning or *essence* of human history is what Mr. Brown seeks to elucidate and interpret for us; and the instrument he relies on is the psychoanalytical method, basically of Freud, but implemented by various discoveries or insights of other analysts since Freud; the chief idea of Freud's on which Mr. Brown relies being Freud's theory of sublimation.

While *Life Against Death* does not proceed systematically, building argument on argument in order to convince us that human history does in fact have the meaning Mr. Brown thinks it has, and while its asides are often better documented and sometimes more interesting than the unfolding of the peculiar vision of history Mr. Brown wants to leave us with—I'm thinking of the very interesting chapter on Swift which is totally irrelevant to the truth or falsity of Mr. Brown's general view—the book does make a definite judgment of what human life has been and urges us to take up

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a definite posture toward what it can be now. I must allow also that it is an unusual work since in this country philosophy of history has seldom attracted much interest and very little has been done in the field by American scholars, certainly nothing comparable to the subtle and refined investigations by such German thinkers as Simmel, Dilthey, Scheler, and Weber.

But though Mr. Brown is surely not to be reproved for having undertaken to work in a discipline American scholars and thinkers on the whole neglected (until very recently, so did scholars in England and in France), he is not to be congratulated on the casualness, and I will even venture to use the word unconsciousness, of his method of procedure. The very great difficulties in the field of philosophy of history scarcely exist for him. Can one sum up the meaning of humanly caused events in one single judgment? And how could any such single judgment be backed against the countless number of events which might lead to the very contrary judgment? This question is never even raised by Mr. Brown in his book. The epistemological difficulties which have to be resolved in a serious philosophy of history he simply ignores, though he in no way gives any argument to show that they are irrelevant. More importantly, he seems not aware that philosophy of history is a dependent discipline, by which I mean it cannot provide its own foundation, but is founded on yet another discipline, namely, philosophical anthropology.

Why is this? Because, as a moment's reflection must indicate, determining what is essential in history, we have to characterize in some essential way the being who makes that history, namely man. And in fact, every philosophy of history so far set forth can be regarded as one detailed development of some decision as to the nature of man which has been taken as essential. This whole matter has been brilliantly explored by Max Scheler in his essay *Man and History*. Scheler writes:

> First, however, a word concerning the relationship between *anthropology* and *history*.
>
> The most important reason that so many and such different conceptions of history and sociology are in such bitter struggles with each other today, is that these conceptions of history are based on fundamentally different ideas of the nature, structure and origin of man. For, whether or not the historian, sociologist, or philosopher of history is constantly aware of it, each historical doctrine is based on a particular kind of anthropology. To be clear to the point of platitude, each philosophy of history is the elaboration of a particular philosophic anthropology, that is to say, a particular judgment of the "nature, structure, and origin of man."

NORMAN O. BROWN'S LIFE AGAINST DEATH is no exception to this rule. An attempt to ". . . give psychoanalysis a philosophy of history," it too is based on a philosophical anthropology, though the author is, as I noted, hardly conscious of the fact and makes no effort to proceed in an orderly way from his notions about the psychic structure of man to his conclusions about the structure of history. On the one hand, he interprets all history in the light of the most recent deliverances of psychoanalysis; on the other hand, psychoanalysis for him is to be understood as the completion of the Romantic movement and "is understood only if interpreted in that light."

So psychoanalysis can only be understood historically; yet *Life Against Death* tells us on almost every page that history can only be understood psychoanalytically. There would be no contradiction here, however, if the author had the clarity to concede that he is interpreting *both* history and psychoanalysis in terms of some prior-held notion about the "nature, structure, and origin of man."

This notion he has in fact derived not directly from the Romantic movement and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not from psychoanalysis either, but from a strain of German anthropological thinking no doubt influenced by the Romantic movement. In the very first chapter of the book, entitled "The Disease Called Man," Mr. Brown tells us:

> We are all therefore neurotics. . . . Between "normality" and "abnormality" there is no qualitative difference, based largely on the practical question of whether our neurosis is serious enough to incapacitate us for work. . . . neurosis is not an occasional aberration; it is not just in other people; it is in us, and in us all the time. . . . Or, to put it another way, the doctrine of the universal neurosis of mankind is the psychoanalytical analogue of the theological doctrine of original sin.

Now, original sin is not just theological doctrine; it is also anthropological doctrine, asserting the notion basic to Christian anthropology. Mr. Brown's anthropology, which he himself sees as an "analogue" to Christian doctrine, holds that man is a "disease," that he has always been ill, and that what we call history is nothing other than the sequence of events motivated by, or symptomatic of, man's illness. Man has acted out a desire for death and destruction, the reason being the repression of his animal drives, a repression imposed by the society he created. Man is sick; moreover, his is a sickness unto death.

An arresting and provocative judgment of man, but hardly a new one, and it predates the psychoanalytic method through the application of which Mr. Brown claims to have it. Once again, let us look at Scheler's essay, published in 1925. He writes:

> Let us . . . study what ideas concerning man . . . are alive today in our occidental civilization. Let us reduce them to the sharpest and most understandable basic types. We shall find, as thorough research has led me to see, *five fundamental ideas*. . . . Three of the five ideas are quite familiar in circles of general culture, even though we rarely find them in sharply delineated form. Two of them, the newest and most recent, are still unknown to those trained in the field because they are so unusual and different. Each of these ideas is accompanied by a special conception of history.

Now one of the five basic anthropological ideas Scheler goes on to discuss resembles point for point Mr. Brown's idea that man is a disease and his history neurosis. Scheler writes:

> To the simple question, "What kind of a thing is man?" this anthropology gives the answer: man's capabilities (use of speech, tools, etc.) are mere substitutions for really vital qualities and activities which could be developed. In view of this, man is a complete *deserter from life*, its fundamental values, laws, its holy cosmic sense, and lives on a diseased exaggeration of his ego.
>
> [And again:] Thus according to this theory, man, first of all, is not, like some species of plants or animals, some dead-end road of evolution in which life can no longer evolve in a chosen direction, and where the species therefore dies. Man is *the* dead-end road of life altogether. Secondly, man is by no means *in genere* (generically) feeble-minded (only few men are that), but his so-called mind itself, his so-called *ratio* is a disease, a diseased basic trend of universal life itself. This *ratio* is precisely the aspect which, according to Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, and Hegel, makes him into *homo sapiens* and partly divine, and, also, the aspect which constitutes his particular "intellectualization," *i.e.*, the fact that so great an amount of accumulated energy is spent, not for the whole of his organized self, but solely for his cerebrum and its maintenance ("slave of the cortex"). The individual is not sick. Within the order of his species, he can even be healthy, but man is a disease.

EXCEPT FOR SOME SLIGHT DIFFERENCE in rhetoric—the terms "sublimation" and "repression" are not employed in the theory outlined by Scheler—this is the philosophical anthropology which founds and gives

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

meaning to Mr. Brown's vision of history. Mr. Brown does hold out the possibility of cure for the neurotic illness of humanity, and it is precisely the same cure offered by the original proponents of sickness as the key to human history. What is a cure for repressed, neurotic man, or man destroyed by his own spirituality? It is, says Mr. Brown, "Dionysian consciousness." For Dionysius "is not dream but drunkenness, not life kept at a distance and seen through a veil, but life complete and immediate." Mr. Brown quotes with approval Nietzsche's remark that the Dionysian "is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art." And the European theorists who preceded Mr. Brown by many decades were committed likewise to Dionysian man, the man of drives who

> stands closer to metaphysical reality and appears here as an ideal strongly opposed to the Greek invention of *homo sapiens*, the Apollonian man. . . . In other words, Dionysian man, with special techniques, excludes the influence of the spirit, that demon, usurper, and despot of life, in order to feel himself part of the great forces of life and to regain his lost unity with them. He is the man who carries in him the "images" of the world.

This is Scheler on the anthropological notions of the publicist Theodore Lessing; the anatomist Louis Bolk; Ludwig Klages, the philosopher and psychologist; Edgar Dacque, paleographer and geologist; and Leo Frobenius, the ethnologist: Scheler could have been writing about Norman O. Brown.

However objectionable this anthropology, which, as Scheler notes, derives from "Savigny and the later (Heidelberg) school of German romanticism," it is certainly far less nonsensical than the psychoanalytically accoutered version of it presented by Mr. Brown. First of all, the German theory (one may refer to it as such) is not a psychological theory and so it has sufficient generality to be intelligible as a judgment (even if false) of the species man. But the terms Mr. Brown applies to man, neurotic, or repressed, are purely psychological terms, not general enough to cover the entire species. The term neurotic, for instance, has to imply, to be comprehensible, a distinction between some who are neurotic and others who are not. There is the further point too —it was raised validly against Freud, but applies even more strongly against Mr. Brown—that individual psychology is something different from group psychology; one cannot simply transfer terms appropriate for the judgment of individuals to the judgment of groups. Thus when Freud expressed the view that religions can be regarded as collective neuroses, he was obviously stretching the meaning of the term neurosis beyond intelligible limits: Mr. Brown has extended it still further, to cover the race.

Then too, the anthropology outlined by Scheler asserting that man is a disease and a false step taken by life, does not have to assert, as Scheler noted, that each particular member of the human race is diseased or sick, or that each action of each individual human is involved in error and bound to be self-defeating. A judgment of the species is something quite different from a judgment of each particular instance of the species. Once again, the psychological conception of neurosis which Mr. Brown has taken over from Freud can apply only to members of the species, not to the species as such. To say, as Mr. Brown does, that man's history is neurosis, is to say that each individual human being who participated in history contributed nothing but his own particular content of neurosis to it; something no historian could possibly know.

Admirers of Life Against Death—the book has a surprising number of intelligent partisans—will, of course, not be satisfied with the argument I have given for the superiority of the German anthropological view. The supporters of Mr. Brown

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

will no doubt argue that the German theory is purely speculative. Is this not also true of Mr. Brown's? Not so, it will be said, his view is backed up by a scientific theory; the Freudian theory of sublimation, which I have not yet touched on. And it will be said further that Mr. Brown's theory must remain intact if the theory of sublimation with which he supports it is not disposed of by criticism.

Now there can be no doubt that the views of Mr. Brown as developed in *Life Against Death* rest entirely on some theory of sublimation. On Freud's theory of sublimation? This is by no means clear. What Mr. Brown has to say about sublimation, though obviously dependent on Freud, is presented in such literary terms that it is hard to say just what the theory is. In Chapter Twelve of *Life Against Death*, a chapter with a very literary title, *Apollo and Dionysius*, Mr. Brown defines sublimation as follows:

> Sublimation is the use made of bodily energy by a soul which sets itself apart from the body; it is a "lifting up of the soul or its Faculties above Matter" (Swift's definition of religious enthusiasm). "Writing poetry," says Spender, "is a spiritual activity which makes one completely forget, for the time being, that one has a body. It is a disturbance of the balance of body and mind." "Mathematics," says Bertrand Russell, "rightly viewed, possesses not only truth, but extreme beauty—a beauty cold and austere, like that of sculpture, without any appeal to our weaker nature . . . The true spirit of delight, the exaltation, the sense of being more than man, which is the touchstone of the highest excellence, is to be found in mathematics as surely as in poetry." And, like the doctrine of a soul distinct from the body, sublimation, as an attempt to be more than man, aims at immortality. "I shall not altogether die," says Horace; "my sublimations will exalt me to the stars (*sublimi feriam sidera vertice*)."

One can hardly say that the notion of sublimation asserted here is Freud's. It should be remembered, too, that Freud himself has been seriously criticized for relating his theory of sublimation to artistic processes; critics have pointed out that Freud's references to art and artists in the statement of his theory are no substitute for the clinical data which he in fact failed to provide. But if fault is to be found with Freud's procedure, what are we to say of Brown's? In addition to Swift and Spender and Russell and Horace, he calls up Cornford, Pythagoras, Parmenides, and Plato. Freud too, finally, but not the Freud of *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, the only work in which Freud directly addressed himself to the problem of sublimation, and in which he set forth the theory he held to, unchanged, throughout his life.

Perhaps Mr. Brown did not want to quote this particular work because in it, speaking of sublimation, Freud admits: "The inner determinations of the process are totally unknown to us." Such a confession is of course useless to Mr. Brown, who thinks he does know the "inner determinations of the process"; he would have to, in order to assert "The mechanism of sublimation is the dream. . . ." Sublimation for Mr. Brown is also "the essential activity of soul divorced from body," whatever that might be.

The truth of the matter is that there is no intelligible notion of sublimation in Mr. Brown's discussion of it and anyone who wants to defend him will have to assert that even if all he says on the matter is purely literary, and from a scientific point of view worthless, he has nevertheless pointed the way to connecting Freud's theory of sublimation with the conclusions of German romantic anthropology. And could it not be the case that a cleverer writer than Mr. Brown might use the Freudian theory of sublimation to back the conclusions of the German anthropological view?

But can Freud's theory of sublimation, in Freud's own version of it, be upheld? As far back as 1913 none other than Max

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Scheler, in his great book, *The Nature of Sympathy*, raised objections to Freud's theory which to this day have not been met by its defenders. Scheler noted:

> IF THEREFORE the word "sublimation" has clear meaning, it can only signify that the repression of the libido has the effect of favoring a flow of energy towards pre-existing aptitudes and aspirations which are, so to speak, constitutional . . . It is unquestionable that, given the rigorously limited quantity of energy man has at his disposal, he cannot devote himself to any effective action of a spiritual, cultural or professional kind, and show himself capable of sympathy and love in their more elevated forms, except insofar as his sexual instinct is subjected to a certain order, and enclosed in certain limits. . . .
>
> But it is not of this old and well known truth that Freud is thinking, and it is not this rational and reasonable meaning that he attaches to the word "sublimation." What particularly characterizes his view is, that according to it, none of the forms of our activity possesses its own energy. Each activity derives the energy it needs from one common source represented by the libido. The relations between the libido and spiritual activity, according to Freud, will therefore be such that any increase of energy realized by the one would mean an equivalent loss of energy to the other. If this were really true, the situation of man would indeed be tragic . . . for then man could only conform in practical life to the values imposed upon him by his conscience by destroying a living part of himself. . . .
>
> His only liberty thus would be to choose between the following: either to renounce all spiritual activity and abandon himself to a kind of primitivism which pushed to the extreme would assimilate him completely to the animal; or to give himself to spiritual activity, cultivate his intellectual aptitudes, but at the price of renouncing the utilization of his most central vital energy and of the happiness which is attached to this use. . . .

And Scheler went on to raise a question still unanswered: from where could the energy for suppressing the libido come?

> But seeing that the libido ends up [according to Freud] by turning to its advantage all the psychic energy it possesses, it becomes difficult to understand how it can give birth to forces destined precisely . . . to repressing it. Thus seen, the libido appears as a mythological entity; it resembles . . . the *ego* of Fichte, which "sets up obstacles to itself." But what one understands even less is the source of those "moral norms" which "from outside," from "society" and from "the state," try to influence the libido, seeking to repress it . . . "society" and "the state," are these not rooted in the human soul? But given Freud's premise, one must ask how the existence of "moral ideas" is in general possible. Here Freud clearly falls into circular explanation. All moral ideas, all moral tasks, and consequently all moral motives themselves are produced from the "sublimated libido," but to make this "sublimation" comprehensible Freud supposes the existence of a "morality" whose commandments would repress the libido and thrust it toward higher purposes.

Perhaps it will be said that these are the objections of a philosopher. Should we not hear from a theorist with analytic competence? Then let me quote from the analyst Harry B. Levey's extraordinary essay, "Critique of the Theory of Sublimation," appearing in *Psychiatry* for May 1939, and recently cited by the French Philosopher Paul Ricoeur, in his sympathetic work on Freud, *De l'interpretation, essai sur Freud* (to be issued in English translation by Yale University Press). Dr. Levey writes:

> My criticisms are that the theory of sublimation is a generalization which has remained essentially static since its formulation in 1905, that it does not comprehensively describe the source of the energy involved nor the process of its modification, that it has remained unsupported by adequate clinical demonstrations of its operation, and that we have not behaved with a critical attitude towards the concept. While other, and often less important, aspects of psychoanalytic theory have been frequently revised with increased knowledge, our atti-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> tude towards the theory of sublimation has been one of laissez-faire and has lacked the perpetual tentativeness which characterizes our orientation to the remainder of psychoanalytic theory.

Dr. Levey concedes that Freud did succeed "in establishing some degree of order in the known facts concerning sublimation," but judges that the theory as a whole "must be evaluated as inconsistent, incomplete, obscure, confused, undemonstrated, and static." Moreover he finds on turning to the descriptive writings of psychoanalysts on sublimation "a voluminous literature consisting of endless and often incorrect paraphrasing of Freud's original descriptive formulation."

Now if Dr. Levey is right—his criticisms have not yet been answered—then the theory of sublimation (still in the state in which Freud left it) is surely no theory on which to base any far-reaching hypothesis. It is certainly not a theory on which to base any pejorative judgment of humanity. Man may have been a mistake—but then it is a mistake for any critic to assert this on the basis of Freud's theory of sublimation. We have grounds, I should say, for thinking better of man than of the theory which condemns him.

TRUE, I FOUND THE GERMAN ROMANTIC anthropology which Scheler called "strange" less vulnerable than Norman O. Brown's new version of it. Still, I think the earlier theory a foolish one, too: the folly of which can best be shown by contrasting it with the other basic notions about man's nature set forth by Scheler.

First of all, there is the Judeo-Christian notion of man as created by a personal god, as suffering from original sin, and only to be redeemed through the intervention of the savior. Then, there is the notion of man derived from Greek philosophy, man as "a rational animal," distinct from all else in nature by his possession of the divine faculty, reason. And third, there is the positivistic or naturalistic notion of man, based on the positive sciences, according to which he is an animal like other animals, and his faculty of reason is not distinctive and does not make him totally different from the other biological species. He has more reason than other animals, but they have a kind of rudimentary reason too.

Let us compare these three very different notions about man's nature, both with Mr. Brown's notion as set forth in *Life Against Death* and with the earlier theory of which his own represents a merely rhetorical revision. We will not fail to note that, behind the three other views, there is the power and meaning of historical experience extending through long periods of time; and also the thought and expression of the greatest minds of the West. Behind the Judeo-Christian conception of man, there is the power and authority of Christian experience; and behind the Greek notion of man as *homo sapiens*, there is the power and authority and the charm, too, of Greek civilization and Greek philosophy. And, finally, behind the naturalistic notion of man there is the massive experience ordered, refined, and synthesized in our positive sciences.

I want to ask now if there are experiences of any comparable power behind either the German theory or Mr. Brown's reformulation of it? And the answer is, I submit, no. The German notion, and Mr. Brown's too, have behind them nothing more than the experiences, perhaps strong ones, of the personal disgust and disillusionment of a few intellectuals—not of the first caliber. The limitations of Mr. Brown's intellect, we have already observed.

I want to stress here that, in determining the origin, nature, and destiny of the human species, some wider-ranging, more total experience is required than any individual could encompass in the short span of his life. Thus Mr. Brown's doctrine, and the German doctrine, are much too intellectual-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

istic for my taste. When I say this about Mr. Brown, I do not mean that his view is clear or coherent—I think I have sufficiently argued that it is not. I mean simply that there is no weight or power behind his view other than his own experience of life—and of a few books perhaps too devoutly read.

Whatever view we choose to hold of man we must hold, I contend, not merely because of what we have thought, but also, and more importantly, because of what we have been. The Christian will try to hold to the Judeo-Christian view; and the scientist very probably to the naturalistic or positivistic one; and those drawn to rational philosophy—which is the same thing as philosophy, for there is no genuine philosophy which is not rational—will try to hold to some modified form of the view that man is a rational animal. Our difficulty today springs from the fact that these three views, each with a tradition of thought behind it, cannot be reconciled. The anthropology of science excludes Christian anthropology, and also the anthropology based on Greek philosophy; for if animals have reason, man cannot be defined as a rational animal; and if man is an animal, like others, then he is not the one creature singled out by God for freedom and faith.

Is there any other possible view of man? Scheler does mention—rather sketchily—a fifth basic notion of man's nature. I myself should like to suggest that this notion is the one which has been expressed since Scheler's death by Heidegger and by Sartre, but to the formulation of which Scheler himself contributed not a little. It is the existentialist notion that man is fundamentally "being-in-the-world," that his existence is, or precedes, his essence. Or, put differently, the world for man is a peculiar problem, a transcendental problem, and unremittingly that: which is to say that the world for man can never be an entirely objective matter. He is inextricably enclosed in what he himself has fashioned. From which it follows that no particular judgments about man can be made which are not paradoxical. But surely this notion of man is implicit in our literature. Moreover, what does it mean to say that man's existence is or precedes his essence other than to say that to form any conclusions about a given individual one has to observe him independently of any theories accounting for the acts of other individuals. Now this notion too is implied in and supported by our literature: in fact, this notion may be properly called literature's reason for being.

Evidently, if we are going to accept any general judgment of the nature of man, we have no alternative but to make some selection from the notions about him which have already been advanced. For what we want, anyway, is not some new notion—novelty and originality are here of absolutely no interest—but a notion that conforms to or expresses some tradition that has influenced us powerfully. The culminating nonsensicality of Norman O. Brown's view is that it refuses to accept any tradition in its judgment of what man is. For Mr. Brown rejects all past experience, which means that he denies any ground for his own judgment. And it strikes me, too, that the many quotations with which he has larded his text, quotations from Augustine and Aquinas down to moderns such as Roheim, Whitehead, and Freud, must, from his point of view, be regarded as without authority. Past experience, he says, has been madness: then what can be gained by citing the mad? If all past experience is to be rejected, why should Mr. Brown cite anyone but himself? This must have occurred to him too. And perhaps that is why in his second book, *Love's Body*, his quotations of others make up so much of his discourse; or, put it the opposite way, so much of the discourse of others is made up of quotations from him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Burton Feldman

Anatomy of Black Humor

IF SOME CRITICS ARE RIGHT, Black Humor may be the only new or important development in American fiction since World War II. The important writers are John Barth, William Burroughs, and Thomas Pynchon—but also James Purdy, Joseph Heller, J. P. Donleavy, Bruce Friedman, John Hawkes, and Terry Southern (according to really ambitious critics, there is even a Grand Tradition which includes everybody good from Andy Warhol and Voltaire back to Aristophanes).

The label fits some of these writers poorly, but generally they do share a new mood and manner. Their view of life is audaciously "black"—subversive, enraged, even apocalyptic. The stage groans with the wreckage of bewildered innocents and sinister megalomaniacs, cannibals, and intellectual rapists. But the Black Humor manner short-circuits any strong response to this. The novels stay coolly "humorous," murderously farcical, coldly zany, cosmically slapsticky. Black Humor likes nutty plots, mischievous messages, and an acrobatic style. Barth invents a wondrous echo-chamber that no longer needs a human voice; Purdy portrays the most intense events with a calculated deadness that stalemates his subject; and Burroughs gets more detached as his prose gets more chaotic.

What results from this hot-and-cold douche is an enigma. Instead of much blackness or humor, there is a nightmarish neutrality and grotesque deadpan, an elaborate novelistic impasse to feeling and judgment. But the strangest result is this: the effect of all this savage gesture and cold comedy is disappointingly mild, even harmlessly "literary."

This is odd because Black Humor scarcely wishes to be so mild or merely "literary." On the contrary; this writing would like to disavow and destroy any moral or sympathetic bond between itself and the reader. It wants to be utterly remorseless toward all the pieties and proprieties. Reading the perfect Black Humor novel would be like driving on ice. And the Black Humorist hopes to be that passenger beside you who helpfully fondles an ice pick while telling unnerving stories. In short, Black Humor would like to be a pitiless comedy. But something seems to be going wrong.

Such a complaint about Black Humor springs neither from outraged liberal idealism nor from an old-fashioned preference for uplifting literature. The truth is that Black Humor disappoints because it is not as pitilessly black or comic as it pretends to be. Given the wretchedness and folly of our century, a genuinely scathing black-comic view would be a welcome purgative. If we can't have tragic poets, we could certainly use some Swifts. Far from being too audacious, Black Humor isn't audacious enough for a world like ours. So the reader may be pardoned if he casts aside literary gentility and gets a little remorseless himself. The ordinary reader will find that he can trump the nihilism or apocalypse of these novels in a twinkling. There is always Auschwitz, or King Leopold in the Congo, or Hiroshima. Such a reader can only be agreed with if he concludes that the world is surely worse than Black Humor is telling him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BUT IT MAY BE AS IRRELEVANT to talk about Black Humor in terms of Auschwitz as to compare Barth or Pynchon to a Russian satirist like Sinyavsky. Auschwitz is after all an unmistakable horror; Sinyavsky satirizes an unmistakably powerful and dangerous political regime. These issues are clear. Black Humor instead seems to be wrestling with something subtler, more insidiously shapeless—American culture in all its permissive restrictions and glossy emptiness. Indeed, the grand theme of Black Humor is nothing else than fraud. The iciest novel in American literature, Melville's *The Confidence Man*, is itself a "comically" uncanny and savage assault on national and cosmic fraud. But to mention Melville is only to emphasize how tame Black Humor seems. Melville's later and bitter obscurity may provide a clue here, as may Sinyavsky's recent imprisonment for "subversion." Neither Melville nor Sinyavsky demeans his themes. The power of their work springs in part from their ability to make us feel the really formidable stature of the enemy. They convince us that to oppose cosmic fraud or political repression will cost heavily—and that such opposition can thus ennoble and even give joy. By contrast, the saddest side of Black Humor is that it can find no compliments to pay its enemy. For all the violence of its assault on American culture, Black Humor gives no sense that this enemy is worth attacking. It is only there, a vast middle-class moonscape; and then Black Humor slips off into fantasy and parody.

As its reliance on parody shows, Black Humor does not unmask the illness hidden under our bland surface; it merely mimics the violence in front of the scene. Melville's ferocity could convey awesome energy because it was an active force. But Black Humor's violence, though tiresomely inflated, is passive. It is violence stylized, theatricalized, overblown—but static.

This does not mean that Black Humor intends its violence to be decorative. There is something of the terrorist in the Black Humorist. Like the classic terrorist, he nurses contempt for the middle class, and seeks a shortcut solution to the problems of complacency and hypocrisy. Disdainful and ruthless, from his impregnable aesthetic fortress, he strikes out at fraud. But Black Humor has one great advantage over the real terrorist—as over a Melville or Sinyavsky: it risks nothing.

FOR BLACK HUMOR'S LITERARY TERRORISM is mated to affluence. Perhaps "Black Humor" never was a good coinage —this kind of writing might better be called "Affluent Terrorism." It wishes to reform but also to indulge us; to scourge us and yet leave us comfortably what we were, neutralized. This ambivalence shows up again in Black Humor's obsession with violence. It is only playing, one knows that. No one will get hurt. If there seem to be pain or degradation or death on the page, the effect will be made incongruous with the fact, sidetracked into a gag, hammed up, parodied away.

The real terrorist was often a man of resentment, dispossessed and declassed; feeling cheated, he could turn into a deadly enemy of his society. Black Humor however springs from affluence, not deprivation. It foments no revolutions, but only literary disdain for its perplexed and perplexing culture. Needless to say, any American novel of worth has resisted the same cultural corruptions. Black Humor does not differ in its rejection of affluence, but only in rejecting it affluently. It can afford to be zany or inhumanly aloof, out of it, punitive with impunity.

For the first time, we may have an intelligentsia at work in the American novel. Rigid European parallels are again misleading: a better comparison is with the "older" American novel. Black Humor novelists are "educated" as American novelists never were before. The point is not sheer learn-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing, but the attitude held toward learning. Melville was genuinely erudite, and the rest were scarcely ignoramuses. But the older American novelist typically is self-educated; his independence of insight as well as parochialism of judgment rise from this. Black Humor is our most knowing and sophisticated novel. But no new age of American urbanity is predicted. Talking plain American, it is more like a shift from buying to spending. One might say that the older American novelist—so self-educated, so distrustful of the Academy—got used to earning what he had to know and wanted to know. He did this painfully, stubbornly, badly, and often went broke (no second acts in American literature). The Black Humorist spends learning, rather than earning it. Black Humor novels burn knowledge with abandon, as gaily and irresponsibly as the millionaire lighting his cigar with a $1000 bill. Nothing personal is intended. It is a generation of college graduates, with higher education assumed at birth. The older American novelist is often described as anti-intellectual, when in fact he is usually anti-academic. The Black Humorist is sometimes said to be a new intellectual, when in fact he is merely academic.

One can call Black Humor a literature of the academy even while admitting that it takes up the American novel's homely themes of sex, money, loneliness, and the rat-race. To all these temptations, however, Black Humor stays cool. The old-fashioned novelist is rarely indifferent to sex or power: they pull at him ferociously. Sometimes, as in Fitzgerald or Mailer, he even has the imagination and nerve to want to conquer and enjoy them. It may seem paradoxical that Black Humor is at once so detached and yet so existentially drenched in these American realities. It is no paradox. Black Humor is existential in an academic way.

All these novels are inconceivable without the hoary themes behind them of absurdity, alienation, nihilism, and the exhaustion of an age. Black Humor stands to existentialism as the American social novel of the thirties stood to European left-wing thought and revolution. In Hemingway and Dos Passos, European Marxism got transmuted into a peculiarly American kind of compassionate anarchism. In turn, Black Humor Americanizes existentialism into a merciless anarchism. For Black Humor has little or nothing to do with what lies behind existentialism as nourishing and steadying forces—Kierkegaard's Christianity, Nietzsche's aspiration to greatness, or Sartre's and Camus' experience during the Resistance. Black Humor exploits the existential style without the substance. Nihilism becomes a mere literary convention. It has no kinship with the novels of Sartre or Camus, where absurdity earned its right to speak amid the painful actualities of politics and history.

Existentialism has always spoken for commitment. By comparison, Black Humor makes such commitment—unspecific as it is—seem like the Ten Commandments. Committed only to detachment, Black Humor can never be betrayed or duped or ever be wrong. That would be an enviable position, but the suspicion grows that such detachment connives with the middle-class rather than opposes it. In this joyless literary burlesque house, the stripteasers and blue comedians will do anything but really enrage or satisfy the customers; make them a little excited and then frustrated, yes. It becomes clear that one genuinely new aspect of Black Humor is its appearance in the novel. One suddenly realizes how the American-English novel, like Anglo-American philosophy and political thinking, has always been a moral agent as well as a realistic image. It may be goodbye to all that. The novel used to teach us to resist social pressures. We may now have to learn sobriety and plainness so we can resist at least some of our novels.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Henry Pachter

The Intellectual as Diplomat

A Critical Discussion of George F. Kennan

THE WHIM OF HISTORY will press into a man's hand a flag behind which he rallies people—only to discover that he does not understand them and that they don't know why they follow him. This happened to George F. Kennan, a diplomat's diplomat, civilized survivor of the Great Century which conceived of diplomacy as an art, and architect of the policy of "containment" which Walter Lippmann has denounced as the origin of the Cold War. Yet the same George Kennan, ten years later, became the hero of the liberal Left, of pacifists and of neo-isolationists, when he coined the slogan "disengagement" and seemed to call for a radically new policy, a policy either based on the premise that the Cold War was over or designed to overcome it.

Though Kennan's colleagues never doubted that he had always been and would always be a conservative, the Left mistook him for one of theirs, and so did Professor Morgenthau, Senator Fulbright, and Walter Lippmann. While the "doves" today include many conservatives and isolationists, the majority in the peace movement consider themselves as revolutionary or at least located on the Left. This misunderstanding may have its source in a generational sea change which also signifies a general realignment of political philosophy—from the globalist democratic idealism of FDR and Truman to the "cool" nationalism of the sixties.

Perhaps the political pendulum is swinging back to the regional and traditional centers it occupied in the first third of this century. As a result, the term "radical" loses its meaning; the dividing line now runs through each party and separates doves from hawks rather than Right from Left or Conservative from Liberal. George Kennan's recently published *Memoirs* offer an excellent opportunity to study the origins of this new coalition and the mind of the man who apparently offers himself as its prophet.*

1. Self-Portrait of the Author

THERE ARE TWO KINDS of "memoirs" in this volume. The first include Mr. Kennan's personal recollections, the diaries of his travels, the sharply etched sketches of people he met (though strangely enough, with the sole exception of Stalin, he has not chosen to include any of his foreign diplomatic contacts), the literary efforts to capture the mood of a landscape, the loneliness of a night spent on a tugboat, a conversation with a Hamburg whore—all written in a literate 19th-century style which has been much admired by the reviewers. The other memoirs, of course, are the "memos in purple prose" with which Kennan bombarded the State Department and which all too often were returned to him without comment. Eventually he came to write these for himself only.

Now the two strands of "memoirs" meet to tell the story of an increasingly lonely man; the unread "memos" intertwine with the memories of professional disappointments and of alienation in Washington. As the author reveals himself a crier in the wilderness, we also begin to understand why he gives us information one normally would not care to have about a minor statesman—

* George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1929–1950*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on his "tight-lipped ancestors," his "18th-century background," his childhood diseases, dysentery and other "discomforts" which early in his life determined his "detachment" and destined him to be "a guest of [his] own time."

This is no ordinary memoir of a diplomat; it is a literary work, an *Erziehungsroman,* the story of a great conversion that begins with forebodings of the hero's calling and through tribulations leads him to resignation and to the wrestling in the desert from which, in the subsequent volume, he will emerge as the prophet: "to carry the public up to a clear view of the occurrences of these last years." Appropriately, the book ends with the outcry:

> The President doesn't understand [U.S. foreign policy]; the Congress doesn't understand it; nor does the public, nor does the press. They all wander around in a labyrinth of ignorance and error and conjecture, in which truth is intermingled with fiction . . . unjustified assumptions have attained the validity of premises . . . there is no recognized theory to hold on to . . .

One wonders: Kennan was a major architect of American policy, for three years the director of the planning staff in the State Department; but this is not the language one expects from a man who chose the profession of a diplomat. By his own confession, Mr. Kennan was unable to get along with his colleagues, his superiors, representatives of other Departments, and with those institutions which, in these United States and other democracies, are the policy-maker's masters: Congress, the press, and public opinion. His contempt of senators, however deserved, was more candid than the Department could afford to show, and heartily as one is tempted to applaud Mr. Kennan in these encounters, the question cannot be suppressed: was he a diplomat at all?

The answer, of course, is that he did not care to be one. His ambition visibly is elsewhere, as when he begins a decisive memorandum to Ambassador Harriman (under whom he served in Moscow): "Peace, like spring, now has finally come to Russia; and the foreign resident, weary of both Russia's war and Russia's winters, finds himself wanly wishing that the approaching political season might not be like the Russian summer; faint and fleeting, tinged with reminders of rigors that recently were and rigors that are soon to come." Did Kennan really expect the busy Harriman to read 30 pages of this? He certainly did not; he reports that Harriman

> regarded himself as an operator rather than as an observer [read: I regarded him as an operator rather than a thinker]. What a trial I must have been to him, running around with my head in the usual clouds of philosophic speculation, full of interests other than my work . . . bombarding him with bundles of purple prose on matters which, as I am sure he thought, it was the business of the President to think about.

Fit this with Kennan's image of himself as a child of the 18th century, fated to be the judge of the 20th, and you see *le philosophe* among the operators and go-getters.

Inevitably, as befits an 18th-century gentleman, his journeys are sentimental, and he, "alone in the entire governmental establishment," has carried into the 20th a moving sensitivity for suffering, decency, and moral values. Coming back after the war to Germany where he had been educated, he winces at

> the spectacle of this horde of my compatriots [the occupation force] camping in luxury amid the ruins of a shattered national community, oblivious of the tragedy around them, inhabiting the villas the Gestapo and SS had abandoned. . . . Much, sickeningly much that was innocent and precious had gone down with the rest. This was, however one viewed it, a tragedy of appalling dimensions. In its presence the victors had a certain duty of self-effacement and humility. . . . We should have been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> hushed by the realization that it was we who had been chosen by the Almighty to be the agents [of this destruction] . . .

The passage is much longer; but there is no commiseration of comparable intensity with the suffering of the Russian people. Yet Kennan was in Moscow during the two periods of their greatest torment, the purges and the war. Being an ardent diarist, he must have written *something* about this ordeal; but the material from this time he chose to include in the book are two gay episodes. The reason may have something to do with the economy of the *Erziehungsroman*: only the enemy can provide the occasion for metaphysical breast-beating.

It is necessary to emphasize this moral mainspring of Kennan's thinking, lest his operational proposals I will have to report appear cynical. He was capable of understanding the logic of Hitler's actions, and he thought that Stalin's "greedy demands" left Hitler "no choice but" to attack Russia; worse, taking the long view of history, Kennan was content to wait out a period of Nazi rule in Europe at the end of which, he trusted, difficulties of communications would erode the Nazi empire, and nationalist forces would complete its disintegration. "I stood temperamentally outside the passions of this war."

After the war, he felt that the JCO 1067 order (barring Nazis from executive positions) and the war crimes trials were stupid. For Kennan is thoroughly convinced that ideas and "causes" always spoil common sense in politics. Well-meaning idealists "only add to the total volume of violence taking place in the affairs of nations"; he himself is "not a man for causes," and if other people have aims, he pities them for being victims to such "weakness of human beings."

Only the 18th-century scholar will understand that there is no conflict between the sentimental *philosophe* and the cynical *politique*: in the hierarchy of values the latter is usually subordinated, and his entire realm is hedged in on all sides by the morality, religion, and conventions of his class, the ensemble of which constitutes civilization. In Kennan's universe the political interest is always on the back burner of human interests, and the aims to be realized in politics are strictly limited: the princes who fought each other remained gentlemen, did not exterminate each other if they could help it, and did not allow politics to devour their own lives. Kennan could not really believe that Hitler wanted to conquer territory in the East (apparently reading *Mein Kampf* was too painful for him, even though he was stationed in Berlin). Nor did he believe in 1950, between the Berlin blockade and the Korean War, that the Soviet threat was military too. For him the totalitarian mentality is a book with seven seals; he shudders and turns away, confident that at some time this madness will be gone and there will again be a sensible man one can talk to.

2. Mr. Cold War

IN STARK CONTRAST to all this coolness, Mr. Kennan delivers himself of angry outbursts like this: "Neither then [in 1933] nor at any later time did I consider the Soviet Union a fit ally or associate, actual or potential, for this country." This from a diplomat and foremost adviser of the State Department on Soviet affairs. Can one really mind that the Russians asked him to leave Moscow a half year after he had been appointed Ambassador?

Even during World War II Kennan warned the U.S. government not to manifest friendship for the Russians in public, and after the war he warned that collaboration in the occupied areas would not be possible. He felt that the inevitable showdown over spheres of influence in a divided Europe should not be awaited but provoked. It is essential to realize that Communism had nothing to do with this aversion. "In

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

itself" a Communist victory in Greece would not have bothered Kennan in 1947. But he feared the falling of the dominoes: the Turks were engaged in delicate negotiations with Moscow, the fickle Arabs might be upset, and when so many people are afraid of what *might* happen, "the shock of a Communist victory could not be risked." Yet, he goes on, let no one think that we are defending "democracy" in Greece; once we give that impression, many others will ask for our aid on the same pretext, and we don't wish to give a blank check to all who think they are in similar danger. Vice versa, we also may have to defend countries that cannot be called democratic by any stretch of the imagination.

Just as Metternich did not think much of the Holy Alliance, so Kennan deplored the language of the Truman Doctrine: Americans must always have an ideology, he moans. As though Pearl Harbor was no reason to fight—we had to "make the world safe for democracy"; instead of simply deciding where to stop the Russian advance, we must fight "the world Communist conspiracy." Of course, once we have declared we are doing that, we may be called to match our actions to our words, even when we cannot match our power to them.

The great enemies of good diplomacy are ideologies and the people who deal in them —the mass media, the politicians and the professors. In case after case, Mr. Kennan shows that American policy-makers are constantly squandering fine opportunities because they have to consider whether what they do will look good to Congress and to public opinion, and this irritates foreign governments needlessly. For even Dulles, Kennan asserts, had no intention of "liberating" any countries. In publishing his views on containment, therefore, "Mr. X." really was saying to the Russians: Please don't mind our propaganda, as we will disregard yours. Neither of us believes in this "world Communism" and "world capitalism" stuff anyway; rest assured that we merely wish to draw a clearer line between your acreage and ours. As Abraham said to Lot: "If thou wilt take the left hand, I will go to the right." Nothing could have been farther from Kennan's intentions than to provide an ideology for a crusade. "Containment" is not a doctrine: "When I think of foreign policy, I do not think in terms of doctrines. I think in terms of principles."

A "doctrine" is the definition of a category of situations that require the identical answer; like Pavlov's dog, "most Americans react to the stimulus 'Communism' with the standard response, 'wipe out.' "

Kennan and others have written against this attitude, which is easy to ridicule; yet the caricature actually does not fit our policy-makers but only certain editorialists. United States foreign policy has at all times differentiated between Russian, Chinese, Yugoslav, and recently also Rumanian Communists. U.S. propaganda has usually oversimplified the issues. It also has placed "containment" in a military context, whereas in Kennan's conception the Soviet threat was not of a military nature and could not be met by primarily military measures. (This may be the best of Mr. Kennan's recollection; but the record shows that he supported the wars in Greece and in Korea, and that he advised General Marshall to keep military forces in Japan and other Eastern countries, wherever the tide of Communism seemed to rise.) For the preservation of peace, he says, "a reasonable balance of power and understanding of the spheres of influence was sufficient."

I know of no clearer definition of the Cold War than Kennan's pronouncement that "American policy must be based on the fact of Europe's division." In this conviction he was so radical that he advised against FDR's efforts to maintain at least the appearance of democracy in the Eastern countries. When the Communists seized power in Prague (in February 1948), Mr.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Kennan's composure remained unruffled: the Russians had held the real power anyway, so what was the difference if they kicked out the figurehead bourgeois ministers? Too bad that a nice fellow like Masaryk had to be plunged out of the window; but was this a good reason for Truman to send a message to Congress and to stir the masses' anti-Bolshevist emotions?

(The information Kennan provides here is incomplete. The Communists were in danger of losing the elections, and without the coup Russian power was fated to decline in Czechoslovakia. Nor can I agree with his assertion that the coup of Prague, as well as the Berlin blockade and the invasion of South Korea, were purely defensive moves. In proving these strange claims, Kennan uses techniques best known in stories about miracles: he claims that he was able to predict these defensive moves because he had correctly analyzed the Soviet need for a defensive move. But this proves nothing. Other people, who assumed that Soviet intentions were *offensive*, also had predicted these moves.)

FROM THESE SAMPLES, it should be clear that Stalin was both right and mistaken when he called Kennan the father of the Cold War. Kennan prematurely accepted the wall between East and West that Khrushchev was to build later. But Stalin at that time still preferred a Europe full of political chaos and economic uncertainty where he could hope to win richer spoils, and he attributed warlike intentions to anybody who tried to stop him, however peacefully.

But we must not blame Stalin for not getting the message, for even Walter Lippmann was deceived. When he saw the "Mr. X." article in the June 1947 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, he uttered a howl in 12 installments, entitled "The Cold War." This, I think, was the origin of the term, and to understand it one must remember that at that time there was no Nato, and no West German government. No one was thinking in terms of a military confrontation, and "cold war" meant what it says: a freeze, a maneuvering for position that excludes "hot" encounters.

Walter Lippmann, however, saw what Kennan to this day cannot understand: that not even Talleyrand and Metternich were playing chess in a vacuum, and that in this 20th century certainly no diplomatic stance can be insulated from a nation's feelings, its ideologies, and its institutions, nor from its power and the will to use it. Just as Kennan professes not to understand why diplomats must explain their policies to Congress, so he professes not to understand what bothered Lippmann: that one cannot "contain" without pushing one's power to the very edge of the Iron Curtain. Lippmann foresaw that, basing our policy on the fact of Europe's partition, as Kennan did, we would only perpetuate, fix, and fortify that partition. He also predicted that this policy would have to be implemented by an ideology and a military policy which fitted it. It was precisely this implementation that later on caused Kennan to repudiate the alleged "doctrine" of containment.

A better word than repudiate would be "amend." To purge himself of Lippmann's charges, Kennan has added three explanations to the "Mr. X" article:

(1) he admits he ought to have made it clear that containment was to be achieved through political rather than military arrangements;
(2) containment was to be applied mainly to Europe and had no application to areas where the United States had no power;
(3) the concept applied exclusively to Stalin's time when the Soviet empire was monolithic. Today, however, the Sino-Soviet conflict "is itself the greatest single measure of containment. It invalidated the original concept of containment and disposed of the problem to which it was addressed. . . . Today there is no such thing as 'commu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nism' in the sense that there was in 1947; there are only a number of national regimes which cloak themselves in the verbal trappings of radical Marxism." Most emphatically, therefore, Kennan denies and repudiates the paternity of any efforts to invoke the containment principle with reference to the Vietnam War or any other situation that arose after Stalin's death and the outbreak of the Sino-Soviet conflict.

These emendations, however, do not strike me as entirely candid. Kennan had approved the *military* moves in Greece and Korea; moreover, Korea is not in Europe, and the war there rested on no better foundations than the one in Vietnam. That the Chinese "contain" the Soviet Union is certainly not true in the Middle East. Of Kennan's hedges only one remains valid: that we should not try to "contain" where we have no power. Like most of his counsel, this is good advice; one cannot repeat platitudes often enough for the Senate. But it does not absolve him of co-responsibility for the Cold War.* In the context of the late forties, containment meant the building-up of positions of strength around the Soviet Union "to support resistance" to its efforts to expand the area of its dominant influence —if anything, this meant to encourage the establishment of a West German government and of a West European Defense system.

In rejecting these consequences of containment, Mr. Kennan has adopted a moral tone that seems to be incommensurate with his generally "cool" approach. To do him justice, therefore, we must once more probe the relationship of values and means in Mr. Kennan's system. One might call him a disciple of Clausewitz in his reverent observance of the hierarchy: if moral values restrict the realm of politics, political values restrict the area of the military. Kennan professes to a visceral aversion to the military establishment; but his suspicions are most intensely aroused when the military get an opportunity to determine policy. They do not have the humility of the gentleman-politician who knows the limitations of statecraft. The soldier is apt to substitute the means for aims, or to escalate the means beyond the *raison* of the ends. Golden principles—but the Marshall Plan and containment, of which Kennan is justly proud, could not have succeeded without a slogan, an idea, a principle, without the strong political framework that provided security for the European recovery program, or without the atomic power of the United States that shielded the venture. Kennan's repudiation of the Cold War, therefore, applies to its ideological aspect alone, but is unconvincing with respect to its material organization.

3. *Self-Portrait as Don Quixote*

GIVEN HIS MORAL STANCE and other intellectual equipment, Kennan was, of course, unlikely to fill a position that in our age the telegraph has reduced to the status of a gold-braided letter carrier. As one should expect, he refused to carry messages of which he did not approve. Remonstrating against his own and the War Department

* The term "cold war" should be understood as merely descriptive and morally neutral. In this sense Bernard Baruch used it during the negotiatons about atomic disarmament. It was a variation of the term "dry war" which was used before World War I in reference to the Anglo-German competition. But "cold war," and "cold warriors" today implies a moral opprobrium which makes it all but impossible to talk about it as a condition which, unfortunately, continues to exist. To say so is rather risky, for the news is not welcome and its bearer appears to sin against good taste and morality.

I do not blame Mr. X, therefore, for telling us in 1946 that Stalin's designs on Europe were the sole cause of the so-called cold war; I blame Mr. Kennan for trying in 1967 to appear as the martyr and precursor of the revisionist school which denies this. The difference between him and Messrs. Alperovitz, W. A. Williams, Fleming, and Lasch is comprised in one word: he felt that the U.S. *could* not prevent Stalin's conquest of Eastern Europe; they feel it *ought* not to have tried to stop Stalin, even where Mr. Kennan thought it possible without recourse to arms.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

twice in wartime, he was admitted to the awesome presence of FDR, who—surprise! —twice sided with him. If the thinker finds a sympathetic prince, he will accomplish his mission. Kennan also hints that later on he saw eye to eye with Kennedy. Moreover, under Truman and Marshall, his famous "Long Telegram" of February 22, 1946, was adopted as the basis of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union, and the still more famous "Mr. X." article became the government's manifesto of the policy of "containment." Considering all this, it is difficult to see how Mr. Kennan can cast himself in the role of a martyr. As director of the planning staff he occupied a room next to the Secretary and had direct access to him; he shared in preparing the Marshall Plan and in formulating the Truman Doctrine; he obtained from General MacArthur important changes in the occupation policy. He held exactly the position an intellectual would want: his assignment was to think about long-term lines of conduct. Why then was he dissatisfied?

The clash that developed is so characteristic that its description alone is worth the price of the book to anyone interested in the relationship between ideas and politics. Kennan found it impossible, in fact he found it unnecessary, to check his ideas with "the operators" who would have to make them work, the Assistant Secretaries of State in charge of the various areas. In an ideal setting, say in England, where all participants might come from the same school, the relationship might be one of cross-fertilization; more normally, it is likely to generate tension. In Kennan's case there had to be either subordination of the operative offices, or the first disagreement would be played out as a drama of spirit versus opportunism, with the predictably tragic ending for spirit. To make the drama even more meaningful, the actual disagreement was not one between two different ideas (which is not really the stuff of a tragedy) but between the idea and its "implementation"; specifically, the idea in question was Kennan's "containment" theory.

The conflict came to a head in the fall of 1949, when the blockade of Berlin forced the Western Allies to decide between two alternatives: either to go ahead with their plan to establish a West German Republic, or to offer Stalin another chance to prevent the partition of Europe and to allow the unification of Germany. Kennan favored the second alternative, and for that purpose designed "Plan A"—a complex and intricate system of balances and counterbalances providing for step-by-step withdrawal of troops from Germany but also for the retention of bridgeheads by each of the four occupying powers in East and West, and for elections that would be free enough to put Western anxieties at rest but meaningless enough to satisfy Stalin. Plan A was so well-balanced that no paragraph could be broken away from it without upsetting the entire scheme. *E.g.*, what if Stalin accepted it but would not allow free elections? Five years later, the Berlin Conference broke up over precisely this issue, and Kennan admits that anyway Stalin would have rejected Plan A in 1949 like all previous and later proposals. For Stalin was quite as happy with the unsettled *status quo*—which still left all of Germany open to anarchy, subversions, interference by Soviet forces, and to other uncertainties—just as Kosygin was to be later with the unsettled *status quo* in Vietnam and the Middle East. Stalin was

They've Got Heart

CAPE TOWN, *South Africa—Said Mrs. Muriel Haupt, mother of Clive Haupt, whose heart was transplanted to Dr. Philip Blaiberg*:

"At the hospital yesterday we were treated wonderfully. Everyone was so kind to us—they treated me and Clive's wife just like whites."

—*London Express*, January 21, 1968

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

holding one-third of Germany as hostage and he had reason to believe that one day, when the Western Allies would grow weary of their long occupation duties, the free two-thirds of Germany would be ready to trade liberty for unity and come to terms with him.

Stalin was not interested in negotiating a peace treaty for Germany; he was interested, at best, in negotiating to kill time while the *status quo* deteriorated and the Germans grew nervous. A peace treaty for Austria along the lines of Plan A was on the table until 1955, and then Molotov only signed it under extreme pressure. Mr. Kennan therefore might have answered Walter Lippmann: It is not a question of deciding for or against the Cold War; the Cold War is on anyway, and the question is of winning or losing it.

48th ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON
of the
League for Mutual Aid
at the
HOTEL COMMODORE
42 St. & Lexington Ave.

Saturday, March 16, 1968
at 12:30 o'clock

Speaker: ALBERT MAYER
ARCHITECT AND PLANNER OF ENVIRONMENT
Subject: THE FUTURE OF THE CITY

Chairman:
BAYARD RUSTIN

Reservations:
$7.50 including gratuities
No solicitation of funds

Write to:
LEAGUE FOR MUTUAL AID
104 5th Ave., New York, N.Y.

Why then did Kennan insist so tenaciously that his plan should be offered? "We would place upon the Russians the onus . . . we would have made it evident that we were not averse to the removal of the division of Germany." We would look good in the history books! Indeed, the plan was beautiful and honest, and in this respect it was comparable to another plan designed by other American intellectuals—Acheson, Lilienthal, and Oppenheimer—also conceived to look good and to be rejected: the Baruch Plan for the control of atomic energy was perfect, well-balanced, and fair; but it could work only if accepted in toto. Neither plan was *negotiable*, and one of the elementary rules of diplomacy is that there must be room for give-and-take. American diplomacy has often suffered from this intellectual style: it offers a solution before it has explored the conditions of bargaining. Like Fourier waiting in his den every Friday for the millionaire who would donate the money for the first *phalanstère*, Kennan was content to wait until Stalin might be converted to his Plan A.

What happened, however, was something different. When the French heard of Plan A, they raised such a howl that the U.S. government had to repudiate its author. Once more Kennan had figured out a chess game and neglected the political environment, the people who would have to make it work. In 1949 Europe could not have stabilized its political life, and the Marshall Plan could not have produced the economic miracle, had not a political organization of Western Europe first given these nations the security on which their confidence rested. To postpone, as Kennan then proposed, the establishment of a West German government would have meant to prolong the uncertainty that paralyzed Europe. Apparently Kennan assumed that the democracies would be patient enough to negotiate for years without result. (Truman's fate in the Korean War later showed that this is not possible.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The question was not whether to start or to avoid the Cold War; the question was under what conditions the West could conduct it at all. Differing with Kennan, therefore, the Secretary of State decided in favor of Alternative Number One—to create the framework in which the realities of Western security took precedence over the chimera of Stalin's change of heart and of German reunification.

4. Mr. Cold Peace

AT THIS POINT, Kennan felt that his usefulness had been exhausted; the decisions that had to be made right there and then presaged a long and arduous confrontation at the edge of the Iron Curtain. Kennan's hopes were still for an ultimate disengagement and the return to a world without blocs. He speaks ironically of "my friends" whose problem it was to terminate the Berlin blockade and to save at least part of Germany for the West, whereas "I was trying to look ten or twenty years into the future." With him were looking for a variety of different reasons, the German Right (who appreciated the fact that Stalin was holding one-third of their country for ransom), the European Left (among them such great socialist leaders as Kurt Schumacher, Pietro Nenni, and Aneurin Bevan, who all appreciated the fact that in any Soviet-American showdown they would be caught in the middle), American isolationists (who feared that we were "overextended" or "overcommitted") and eventually the anti-American Right nationalists abroad (who hoped to achieve elbow-room for independent policies on the world stage). For all of them, the idea of "disengagement" and "neutralism" became attractive either as a means to prevent the Cold War from escalating into a hot war, or to promote their own national aims.

De Gaulle is the latest of this motley company—or, vice versa, one might call Lippmann and Kennan premature Gaullists. For a long time, Kennan was the foremost, best-known, and most articulate spokesman of "disengagement" and a sort of hero to the pacifist Left. It should be clear, however, that he considers himself a conservative; even when he seemed to have achieved stature as a leading thinker of the opposition, he was misplaced among his admirers. (This does not necessarily mean that his ideas are wrong or that liberals and radicals could not use them. On Vietnam they certainly are all aligned with Lippmann, Morgenthau, Fulbright, and Kennan.)

For "disengagement" is not the property of any party. At different times, Anthony Eden offered plans for "thinning out" and "withdrawal"; the Polish Foreign Minister Rapacki offered a plan to denuclearize central Europe. The American government is anxious to shift the responsibility of defense from its own shoulders to its allies'. Finally, in the most recent months a new isolationism has appeared in the United States, provoked perhaps by the Vietnam War, but widening its revisionist scope to other areas and now probing into the foundations of power policy.

George F. Kennan certainly is no longer alone. "Neutralism" is almost the fashion now. The split-up of NATO, the decomposition of the West into a number of smaller units is almost a fact. Most likely, Kennan will again be unhappy about the way his dreams have come true. He is neither an isolationist nor a "peacenick." He mourns for the British Empire because the vacuum left has been filled by young nations. They are no less belligerent than the old Big Powers and are using their new power irresponsibly; Kennan has no sympathy for them. In contrast with the Left,

PUBLIC NOTICE
John P. Roche
is
Alive & Swell
in
The White House

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he recognizes power as the subject of history. But since power no longer is speaking with the voice of the Spirit, Kennan recognizes that the intelligentsia's role is outside the gates of power. We are thus left with the picture of a man more lonely than most others—misunderstood by those who hail him.

Kennan was responsible for two great works of postwar politics: *containment* and *disengagement*; indirectly he provoked the third, *cold war*; the fourth, *coexistence*, has been used by Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin long before Khrushchev made it into a slogan. What is the relationship between these four words? Kennan thinks that containment and disengagement are complimentary: the first was supposed to lead to the second, though it actually led to the third—cold war. With this Kennan denies any connection, but he might claim allegiance to the fourth. In fact, his definition of containment could easily stand for Khrushchev's definition of coexistence if you change your position from facing East to facing West.

Unfortunately, it is not a matter of accepting or rejecting a definition. It is incomprehensible to me how anyone can say that the Cold War is over—even in Europe —as long as the wall stands in Berlin and people get shot for trying to cross from one country into another, or as long as Moscow can forbid Austria to join her natural market. What we have is at best a cold peace, meaning that no one thinks of invading or liberating a country on the other side; but even this refers to Europe alone. On other continents the Cold War rages more intensively than ever, and in particular areas it even turns into hot war. "Coexistence," a laudable concept if proposed sincerely, has turned into a device to stabilize one front while maneuvers are pushed elsewhere. The only gain I can see is a certain moral disarmament, a subsiding of the propaganda war and a withering of the crusading spirit. Mr. Kennan may share in the credit for defusing this propaganda aspect of the Cold War; but that has not changed the condition itself, the power struggle and the policies which are still, in his words of 1946, "balancing the spheres of influence."

One must sympathize, in a way, with Kennan. In his Quixotic fashion he represents the eternal interest of diplomacy as against the military; of the farseeing statesman whose plans extend into the next decade as against the near-sighted "operator" who is tossed about by the problems of the day; of the intellectual who remains conscious of values transcending the realm of the political.

George F. Kennan's *Memoirs* are important because they dramatize the clash between ideal and fulfillment, principle and opportunity, spirit and power. In our century it has become increasingly difficult to find the right relationship between these extremes. "When hours may decide the fate of generations, the moment of decision must become the moment of *action*," said President Johnson, who probably lives at the other end of the philosophical spectrum from Mr. Kennan.

The term "tragic" does not sufficiently characterize Kennan's dilemma as he faced the military-diplomatic power complex; since he chose to appear as the martyr of a cause, we have to judge him on his own premises. In opposing a policy of "disengagement" to the so-called Cold War, he merely presented the other horn of the same dilemma; he does not see that his conflict is a symptom of a wider question—that of the intellectual in politics. There have been three classical models of that relationship, the Greek, the German, and the French: the philosopher as the instructor of the prince, the philosopher as the ideologist of the prince, and the philosopher as the critic of the prince. Mr. Kennan seems to have in mind a confused American model, the philosopher as the substitute for the prince; and it does not seem likely.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

H. Brand

Vietnam and the U. S. Economy

Can the Freedom Budget Solve Our Problems?

THOSE WHO BELIEVE that the American economy can provide the means both to fight the war in Vietnam and wage massive attack on poverty at home must also believe that economic resources can be shifted from private to public purposes, without affecting privileged positions and vested interests and possibly without jeopardizing the very sources which under American capitalism generate growth. For such a shift would, at the least, require heavy increases in taxation, which would weaken private investment and consumption and strengthen the public nondefense sector. They also must read into available unemployment statistics the view that the utilization of manpower is running below optimum levels, and must infer that enough "slack" exists to permit, given the "will," a more energetic attack on domestic problems.

President Johnson's timidity in requesting even a puny surtax which would have reduced personal income by 1 per cent, and the stubborn refusal by Congress to enact the request when it was finally made, dispose of the first assumption as being simply apolitical. The second assumption is weakened by the record-low jobless rate among adult males (the chief repository of knowledge and skills), large numbers of whom have been absorbed either by the military or in defense and closely-linked capital-goods industries—and who are thus unavailable for tasks of social reconstruction.

Those, on the other hand, who insist that it is the war in Vietnam which prevents effective dealing with problems at home are guilty of either or both of two errors: one, they imply that the end of the Vietnam War will free the resources necessary to wage peace at home, which may be the case but does not follow with compelling logic: the end of the Korean War was succeeded by recession in the economy and virtual stagnation (even the threat of regression) in social legislation. Two, they read into the "war" on poverty a promise of acceleration which was never made, and they ignore the fact that until sometime early last year, the means devoted to antipoverty programs continued to increase at about the same stingy rate that had obtained prior to the escalation of the Vietnam conflict. The expansion of the defense sector has itself contributed to yielding revenue required to sustain domestic programs: between the second quarter of 1965—just prior to escalation—and the third quarter of 1967, military expenditures rose by 49 per cent, and their rise represented one-fifth of the increase in the national product over the 2¼-year period. Government sources estimate that about one-fourth of defense spending returns as tax revenue.

Both camps proceed from a common assumption, *i.e.*, that growth of the American economy can be taken for granted (this I shall not argue), and that gains in federal revenue generated by growth can more or less freely be allocated among armaments, social purposes, and private consumption via tax cuts. Thus the disposal of the "fiscal dividend" has come to be seen as the key to the elimination of social ills. Institutional change appears no longer to be a prerequisite for that. Indeed, the structure of the economy and society which generates the dividend

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can be, perhaps must be, left untouched—it is the goose that lays the golden eggs.

No doubt, I have oversimplified the grouping of existing points of view on current economic possibilities of dealing with social problems. A third point of view has been espoused by Seymour Melman, who attacks military priorities as part of a "policy system" which he altogether rejects. He proposes an alternative policy system, structured so as to emphasize social priorities on a worldwide scale. My sympathies are close to Melman, but his "policy systems" are a technocratic construct lacking a social content on which political pressures could operate.

Here, my concern will be briefly to contrast the Freedom Budget, which is broadly representative of current left-of-center thinking (and to which I allude in the first paragraph of this article), with the actual tendencies in the disposition of the fiscal dividend.

Sponsored as it was by persons of divergent views, the Freedom Budget necessarily represents a consensus. Its objectives are readily reconcilable with a Democratic party platform. Since, however, representatives of labor as well as socialists are prominently associated with the Freedom Budget, it strikes the critical reader by its studied political neutrality: poverty, inadequate health, education and welfare services, and other evils are documented in some detail, but their *causes* are nowhere identified in terms of the social and economic institutions which breed them. Hence, no institutional reforms are proposed by the Budget. The Federal Budget—"the main instrument of national economic policy"—is the only mechanism which would deal with the "priorities" set forth in the Freedom Budget. Its authors know, of course, that allocations in the Federal Budget are the result of political pressures; the Federal Budget reflects these pressures, and is not in itself an agent of institutional change or social planning.

The authors of the Freedom Budget eschew, however, all suggestions of either. Nor do they propose any *shift* in financial resources within the Federal Budget to provide funds for larger social programs. They would rather draw (presumably by way of taxation whose rate structure would remain unchanged) on the annual *increment* in the national product, "the economic growth dividend," which is expected to amount, cumulatively, to $2.3-$2.4 trillion over the 1965–75 decade. The authors declare that "even those who are already affluent or wealthy would not be penalized in any way in order to accomplish [the] great priority purposes" of the Freedom Budget, and while there are occasional references to inequality in the distribution of income, no proposals to eliminate it are made. In any case, the references are not functional elements of the exposition.

By insisting that major social ills can be eliminated without disturbing the traditional balance between private and public sector, the Freedom Budget avoids the question of whether that "balance" does not itself engender or perpetuate those ills. Yet, it would not be hard to show, for example, that corporate control over prices and capital investment vitiates wage policies favoring low-income earners, crimps funds for adequate pensions for all, cuts into manpower and material resources required for public services, and virtually precludes rational regional and intraregional planning. Maybe it *is* true that poverty can be eliminated without interfering with the existing private-public balance, but the Freedom Budget cites no historical example which demonstrates that it has been done. Relatively decent working conditions in the factories came about because trade union struggles changed the "balance" between labor and industry and helped incorporate the changed balance in law. Analogously, major extensions of the "welfare state" in the U.S. are much more likely to develop through organized struggle

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(whatever the form) than by asking for crumbs off the tables of the affluent and assuring them at the same time that they need not fear for their privileges.

IN THE ABSENCE of a shift in the relationship of political forces, the dominant interests of the American body politic have first call on the fiscal dividend (which is what the Freedom Budget's "economic growth dividend" is all about)—and in fact they do and did, with the explicit support of the Johnson and predecessor Administrations. The tax cuts made in 1964, worth $19 billion to individuals and corporations, were and remain exemplary of the use of the dividend: the cuts were meant not only to stimulate the business sector but to enlarge its share of economic activity as against the government sector. That was at the time the clear mandate of Chairman Mills of the House Ways and Means Committee, endorsed by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. According to Secretary of the Treasury Fowler, President Kennedy "rebutted any notion that rising federal revenue in the years ahead mean that federal outlays should rise in proportion to such revenue increase. . . . [He asserted that] as the economy climbs toward full employment, a substantial part of the revenue increases must go toward eliminating the deficit."

President Johnson spoke in a similar vein when he signed the 1964 tax reduction into law, and Fowler has cited numerous examples of Johnson's continued fiscal conservatism—a conservatism that is not merely opportune but real enough to anyone who compares Johnson's talk of Great Society programs with recent cutbacks in social welfare programs—programs which had been skimpy to begin with. Furthermore, says Fowler, "the first item on the President's post-Vietnam agenda" is the possibility and priority of tax reduction—not any step-up in antipoverty programs.

That part of the increment in federal revenue which has not been, or is not to be, absorbed by tax cuts has been and is predominantly applied to past, present, and future wars. Between fiscal 1962—the first in nine years when a Democratic Administration had full control of the purse strings—and fiscal 1968 (which began last July 1), federal tax revenues will have totaled, cumulatively, an estimated $700 billion, and deficits (which are additions to the public debt) about $44 billion. Of the available $744 billion, 80 per cent or $593 billion were spent on defense, space, international affairs, interest on public debt (incurred mainly for war financing), and veterans' benefits. The share of all domestic programs comprised 20 per cent or $150 billion—which included many expenditures that cannot be regarded as social welfare measures.

If we look only at the *increment* in tax revenue and in the deficit—$47 billion between 1962 and 1968—the relative share of domestic programs is 28 per cent or $13 billion. This is the sum which became available for new or expanded domestic or civilian programs. Over the same period, the increment in the total national product will have amounted to about $250 billion. Thus one nickel out of every dollar of the economic growth dividend of the past six years will have flowed into such programs—a relationship that may or may not change in the years ahead, but that cannot be altogether ignored when appraising the prospects of even so modest a proposal as the Freedom Budget.

If government policy thus aims at the deliberate strengthening of the private sector by means of tax reductions (when these are feasible), and if defense spending continues high or rises further, then the very availability of the fiscal dividend on the scale envisioned by the Freedom Budget is in question.

It is of more immediate political importance here, however, that the Johnson Administration has brought disrepute to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Economics, which teaches that government expenditures should exceed tax revenues by an amount roughly in proportion to the magnitude of those resources which the private sector fails to absorb. Unwilling to intensify conservative opposition to its domestic programs or to heighten the controversy over an unpopular war, the Johnson Administration only belatedly asked for (and at this writing has still not obtained) a tax boost. It has had to finance the war by enormous deficits. These deficits have, on the one hand, failed to reduce unemployment significantly below 4 per cent—an outcome predicted by many economists who have viewed much of present unemployment as stemming from the changing skill structure of the economy, rather than from inadequate final demand.

On the other hand, the deficits have added to the strong upward pressure on prices which stepped-up war production has engendered. Not only have price rises prevented real incomes from advancing (at the end of 1967, real weekly take-home pay of a worker with a family was all of 50¢ higher than the year before); they also raise the costs of public services, thus further straining the fiscal capacity of sub-federal jurisdictions and intensifying the inadequacy of such services. Moreover, the large federal deficits, financed as they have been in capital markets already heavily drawn on by business and state and local units, have been a major cause of increases in interest rates.

The Federal Reserve, frequently the scapegoat of easy-money advocates, has gingerly avoided attracting criticism. It has done what it could and under its charter must do to facilitate government finance. Not monetary policy but a politically cowardly fiscal policy has lifted interest rates to levels where they have throttled the flow of capital into residential construction. In consequence, home and apartment vacancy rates have declined close to early postwar lows, and the incipient housing shortage has made the country's ghettos even more airtight than they already were.

To liberals and leftists, deficits may seem a painless way of helping to finance desirable social programs and of obtaining full employment. To Chairman Mills and his like, however, deficits do not merely serve as a pretext to compel cutbacks in domestic programs. Mills, after all, represents a society in which "balancing the books" is inherently virtuous, and a government deficit defines a social disequilibrium, signaling a possible shift in the relationships of power in favor of the state.

According to Chairman Mills, the threatening disequilibrium must be restored not only by tax increases—on the contrary; tax increases unaccompanied by "real and significant expenditure reductions and firmer controls would have a serious long-range impact upon the direction of our economy. I fear it would mean bigger and bigger government with a smaller and smaller range of freedom of activity for the private sector. I do not intend to be a party to this kind of program" (*New York Times*, November 21, 1967).

This is not ideological phraseology but articulation of a conservative position. Yet, the validity of this position seems hardly more questionable than that of those left-of-center liberals who view the fiscal dividend as a politically neutral instrument which obviates institutional change as the means of rooting out social ills.

The conservative stance chooses to ignore the sustaining force of government spending and of fiscal policy in the economy. The left-of-center position, welcoming the greater role of government, generally remains silent, at least in its programmatic statements, about the frequently observed effects of some kinds of large-scale government expenditures in aggravating the evils which social programs are expected to remedy. Examples include agricultural price sup-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ports, which have contributed to capital intensity on farms, and thus to the exodus of the rural poor to urban slums; or the highway and urban renewal programs, which in many instances have tended to worsen the condition of the urban poor.

Finally, defense programs, far in excess of demonstrably rational requirements, typify the tendency of modern capitalism to apply its rich pool of technology and talent to unproductive and outright destructive purposes. Over the long term, this tendency deprives the forces of social reconstruction of needed moral and physical resources.

The Freedom Budget, thoughtful in estimating required funds for a wide variety of social improvements which would account for somewhat more than two-fifths of projected 1975 federal outlays, abdicates responsibility ("makes no attempt at independent judgment") in regard to the other three-fifths that are to be devoted to defense, space, and international programs. Its assumptions about these programs involve a gain of $23 billion between fiscal 1967 and fiscal 1975 when the war in Vietnam is likely to have ended. Since the assumptions are only implicit, they cannot be debated, but it should be noted that few qualified observers share them.

"Many careful projections of defense expenditures show a basic stability for the coming decade," writes Murray Weidenbaum, who is an outstanding expert in the field (in *Prospects for Reallocating Public Resources*, American Enterprise Institute, page 56). Whether or not such projections are more "realistic" than those of the Freedom Budget, on the surface they strengthen the Freedom Budget's case that resources for the elimination of poverty and other ills are ample. Its unrationalized defense-space projections do, however, underline its excessive concern with not upsetting the "traditional balance between federal actions and other public and private actions." Yet if this "balance" results in ever larger defense-space outlays, it implies a political line-up not dissimilar to the one prevailing at present—one that is hostile to making the resources available on which the realization of the Freedom Budget's objectives depends.

THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS of a large, powerful defense-space complex cannot be discussed here. Its economic importance as an autonomous source of economic "growth" is now such as to make even partial reconversion, were that contemplated, quite difficult. This is shown by an examination of the direct effects of defense spending on employment. In mid-1965, 9 per cent of total payroll employment was directly attributable to defense spending; by mid-1967 the ratio had risen to more than 10 per cent. Of the 3.2-million rise in total employment over these two years, roughly one-third was due to the Vietnam build-up. Considering the indirect effects of expanding defense employment, there can be no question that the boom of the past two years had its source in that build-up; according to calculations by Daniel Suits of the University of Michigan, the unemployment rate would exceed 7 per cent but for Vietnam. Only about 5 per cent of all jobs in private industry (or close to 3 million) are currently directly generated by defense, but in industries where value added and capital investment are highest, the relevant proportions are considerably greater. In manufacturing, nearly 11 per cent of employment is defense-generated, while in services, the proportion is less than 3 per cent.

Defense activities employ relatively large numbers of skilled and semiskilled workers, and relatively small numbers of unskilled and service workers. Numbering 1.9 million in 1967, the semiskilled and skilled represented 16 per cent of all workers in their occupations, or 44 per cent of total defense employment (but only 32 per cent of *total*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

industry employment). Such workers have experienced the sharpest job gains due to Vietnam. For many, the end of Vietnam will raise major problems of re-employment, arising in part from the slowdown in the economy, in part from the difficulty of transferring skills.

There is no backlog today of urgent consumer needs or of capital investment requirements. And in a society that of necessity must seek to expand job and investment opportunities in services, the men and women made unemployed by the end of the Vietnam War will offer experience in goods-production work or in war-oriented research and design. We must remember that we are speaking only of the end of the Vietnam conflict, which would present difficulties, although not insuperable ones.

The American economy would not, however, be able to cope with disarmament on any larger scale; it remains dependent, as a matter of indisputable fact, on heavy defense expenditures, and it possesses at present neither the "flexibility" nor the institutional means to abandon any significant portion of its military-industrial apparatus. Comparisons with the aftermath of World War II would be sorely misleading. So would comparisons with other industrial countries, many of which are beginning to face problems of structural unemployment and insufficient investment outlets with which the U.S. has had to grapple since the mid-fifties.

There has never been much doubt on the part of the Left about the productive power of capitalism—leftists were the first to note and analyze it. A major preoccupation of the Left, however, has traditionally been the distribution of wealth and income, and its relationship to politics. With steady economic growth, high levels of employment, and an annual fiscal dividend being evidently assured, that preoccupation seems to have become outmoded.

But it turns out that employment remains contingent in good measure upon continued spending on armaments and on a rising level of private consumption, and that the conservative forces which base themselves on such an economy thus become major claimants to the fiscal dividend. Hence, we cannot count on its automatic availability. Social advance remains a painful struggle in the realm of politics. It must indeed concern itself with broadening the base of the welfare state; but its strategic objective must be to change the institutional alignments which lie at the root of social evils—including that greatest of evils, war.

FOR INDISPENSABLE READING

On Today's World and What's to Be Done

READ THE WESTERN SOCIALIST

$1.00 for 6 issues; $2.00 for 15 issues

Recent issues featured: 50 Years of Bolshevism; Chinese Cultural Revolution; Civil Rights and Civil Riots; War in the Mid-East; We Speak Out on Vietnam; How Capitalism Works; New Ferment among Youth; The U.S. Giant, Science & Socialism.

Sample copy of any above titles on request

Write to *The Western Socialist*

295D Huntington Ave., Room 212, Boston, Mass. 02115

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jeremy Larner

A Happening Called World War II

THE MOVIE HOW I WON THE WAR is a cartoon using live actors instead of animation. Director Richard Lester, full of what one reviewer calls "aesthetic consciousness," props up a group of wooden soldiers who drag a roller across the deserts of North Africa to set up an "advance cricket pitch," and later reappear under fire in a European village, where they die comic-strip deaths. At all times the personnel let you know they know they're in a movie, obviously by intention, as is made doubly clear by scenes in which earlier war movies are parodied and newsreels of Dunkirk are worked cleverly into the puppet choreography.

For example: A group of officers is seen in ridiculous costumes. One turns to camera and announces, in a fairly typical specimen of dialogue, "We are exchanging bubble-gum cards. We are staff officers." The action in *How I Won The War* is random, farcical, and metaphoric, united, if at all, by the continuously obtrusive camera effects. The scenes of war come in little pieces of dada in which the visual and verbal components are stitched together as if in collage. Thus the camera looks down from high above as the company drives trucks in a circle on the desert. John Lennon, supposedly playing a Mosleyite fascist, leans out of his truck and screeches, "My feet are wet! My feet are wet!" This goes on for some time. Finally he is made to go stand in a nearby ocean.

SOME COMMENTATORS seem to feel that Lester has revealed something about the brutality or the absurdity of war. Yet there is no attempt to recreate war's actuality. Nor is war really mocked; for it is impossible to mock what is never there. The Marx Brothers (or the Good Soldier Schweik) could baffle and outrage a moral pomposity which brutally intruded upon them. But in this film, reality never shows its difficult face; the references are strictly confined to other films or to the director's imagination.

There are moments, nevertheless, of direct comment. A soldier about to shoot the gung-ho young officer is checked by his mate with the epigram, "If you shoot one you gotta shoot the lot, you know—before they take their exams and are taught virtue and industry." It would be nice to think that this is merely more dada, but I am afraid it is meant seriously. Lester, like some of the new slicksters in Hollywood, has no objection to mixing deliberate nonsense with satire with straight moralizing. It is a way for a film of pretentions to touch all the bases. If you object to the shallowness of a given line, you will be informed that Lester is parodying, or "transforming" an older war flick; if you find the parody pointless—man, that's just the point.

For there is a certain kind of film viewer who will endure any kind of boredom if he can be assured he is watching genuine "art." Art to him is anything blatantly contrived—otherwise how could you tell it? Such people find movies marvelous to talk about because one need never ask whether or how the parts of a movie fit together. One can simply dig what a gas it was when a certain effect was achieved, and were you hip to the bit where Lester cut in *Grand Illusion?* For the sake of such cunning games they will endure movies more stultifying than anything on earth except film criticism.

OF COURSE SUCH MOVIES could not exist without the verbiage which explains them. That's what poppy art is all about—"significance" and "stance." Look and see if most of the appreciations of *How I Won The War* are not panegyrics on Lester's significance and stance.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Poppy art must come all wrapped up in an explanation: so that when the viewer has had his obligatory taste, he can throw away the art and keep the wrapper as a certificate of hipness.

Formerly, the great cinematic artists were those who used film to shape a world that had a meaningful relation to the confusion around us. Currently, a tacit assumption is widespread that no meaningful relation is possible; that feelings, motives, and acts are merely colored beads to combine and recombine according to one's own dear daring notions of what will disturb or expand the sensations of the art consumer. This is more of course than nihilism; it is an assertion of one's own superior vantage point.

The pleasure of such a view is its insulation. One watches from a privileged peephole as the stuff of politics or war or history are chopped up and glued back together in absurd patterns. Director invites audience to share the unprecedented insight that all human activity is based on falsehood. Such perspective can be harsh—if no exceptions are permitted, as in Celine. But Lester distributes sentimental lollipops throughout his movies to indicate that true feeling is possible after all—but only by tuned-in down-to-earth *real* people. In *A Hard Day's Night*, Lester had the Beatles go through a maudlin encounter with four little boys playing hookey: pseudo-counterparts. Now the four little boys are assimilated into the audience, and the mere sight of John Lennon spreading open his shell-blown guts is enough to trigger the emotional blackmail of the in-feeling.

What the in-feeling amounts to is that us little real people are all the victims of the big bad ones and their unreal constructs, such as war and history. But secretly we are artists and therefore we can abolish history altogether. For that is the effect, finally, of *How I Won The War*. World War II didn't really exist, only your heads exist. For the viewer who accepts the idiom, World War II was nothing but a series of "images," like so many drug visions strung together in the guise of newsreels and war films.

Kind of reassuring when you think about it, or rather, dissolve into it. All the motives and feelings, the atrocities, the decisions, the massacres, even the heroism—manifested, disturbingly enough, by human organisms like you and me—don't have to be analyzed, accepted, depicted, or even acknowledged. It was only a bad trip, man—a hangup in the heads of some pretty weird people.

Jonathan Eisen

Giving Hanoi The Mad Ave Treatment

WHAT IS most interesting about Felix Greene's new film—*Inside North Vietnam*, now showing in New York and theatres throughout the country—is that, for all its claims to truthfulness and humane feeling, it employs a strategy of propaganda not radically different from that of the Bell Telephone Hour, and thereby renders itself useless as the documentary it purports to be. Mr. Greene has taken his camera and produced a montage of half-truth, almost embarrassingly simplistic in his obvious yearning to make a point that is by now common currency. He has thereby perverted his intention, which was presumably to show the North Vietnamese as they are suffering, into a piece of ideological trumpet-blaring.

Mr. Greene's method was to interview workers and peasants, a colonel, the Prime Minister, and a captured American flyer, in an effort to "present" their viewpoint to an American audience. Unfortunately, the result is that thanks to both stilted questions and a rather too obvious staging, what emerges is a Prime Minister and a young worker saying virtually the same things in the same language, and an interviewer who looks more the fool for his hyper-sincerity and eager agreeableness. The only interview that actually comes off is with a peasant whose wife and young son were killed three days prior to Mr. Greene's arrival. In marked distinction to the others who passively relate their determination to fight the American aggressor and turn toward peace with their American brothers, etc., etc.,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this is the only man who displays burning anger at the atrocity and its perpetrators, and actually seems the only one who hates the war. The others appear less motivated by their own ideas and passions than by the script that is everywhere in evidence and transforming them into the very puppets the Western press says they are. Indeed, if there is a unifying theme in Greene's film, it is not how much pain and suffering the United States has inflicted on these unfortunate people—though devastation was amply in evidence—*but how the war is acting as a positive force.*

Scene after scene portrays unity, forbearance, courage, and the progress North Vietnam is making, despite and sometimes because of the war itself—as in the case of the women who, Mr. Greene relates, are becoming emancipated thanks to the labor shortage. The horror notwithstanding, Mr. Greene has produced another war film which subtly glorifies war as an institution by manufacturing the agit-prop figure of the "warrior-citizen," not merely denying his real troubles but his reality as well.

The Medium Is the Message

Bruce Stauderman, creative director of Ogilvy & Mather, Inc., New York, has been addressing members of the Australian Association of National Advertisers in five cities down under. In his speech, entitled "Anatomy of the Television Commercial," he is reported to say:

"Now when it comes to television, the estimate is that every year the average viewer watches approximately 430 hours of commercials! About 60,000 separate television spots. I guess we could say he's really seeing spots before his eyes.

"One professor of social psychology estimates that only three out of 10 commercials are consciously perceived by the audience; that only one out of 20 succeeds in mobilizing certain buying behavior; and that only one out of 123 commercials activates the viewer from the very first time he watches it.

"People are getting tired of the old ways of advertising. Especially the young. They never really built up a tolerance for it. Because it didn't start in small doses with them; they've been blasted with it since they've been born."

Ruby Cohn

Black Actors Off Broadway

PETER WEISS WRITES at the edge of the bearable. *Marat/Sade*, his best-known play, assaults us mainly through the perpetual motion and emotion of a background of actors imprisoned in lunacy. Weiss' scenic directions emphasize their shock function: "Their presence must set the atmosphere behind the acting area. They make habitual movements, turn in circles, hop, mutter to themselves, wail, scream, and so on." *The Investigation*, an oratorio, rivets us to a dry recitative for the fiendish routine at the concentration camp. Staged as a trial, the oratorio divides into the testimony of Nazi defendants, who have names, and their plaintiff victims, who have numbers. Though the play is staged as a trial, it is accurately entitled *Investigation*—into the way detention routine develops into inventive sadism, into the way maps and statistics burst into barbarism.

In *The Song of the Lusitanian Bogey* the center is neither lunacy nor death-camp, but a pop-sculpture, scrap-iron bogey. Assembled on stage by the actors, the Bogey symbolizes Lusitania or Portugal, whose African empire has lasted for 500 years. Weiss' play consists of a series of songs and scenes about this bogey, a mechanical monster. This series constitutes an investigation into the persecution and assassination of black by white in the land of the blacks. In *The Song* Weiss abandons the dazzling theatricality of *Marat/Sade*; except for the bogey, the stage is bare; the nine actors—five men and four women—wear slacks and jerseys; their words and movements are accompanied by the playing of four musicians.

Weiss has often announced his debt to Brecht, and the play begins by hammering us with Brecht's estrangement techniques—harsh lighting, cool music, "epic" narration, and the songs themselves. As with Brecht, the purpose is didactic—to teach us about Lusitanian oppression in African colonies. But as in Brecht's plays, there is involvement in spite of all the estranging techniques; Weiss may have in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tended this involvement, moving as he does from the general statistic to the individual black victim. The first act closes on two separate scenes of white brutality against single blacks; in the first, a black "criminal" is hunted down by bloodhounds; in the final scene, Anna, a pregnant black servant in the big house, is beaten and kicked so that she loses the child.

ACT TWO OPENS comically; a black hick from the sticks of Angola comes to the capital. But not knowing his place in this white-ruled city, he soon incurs white wrath, and is shot to death before he loses his admiration of all that surrounds him. Then, as Act I moved from the general to the specific, Act II moves outward from the individual to the general—to a general revolution of black against white. First a group of blacks ask for schools for their children; when they are brutally murdered, rebellion grows; rebellion swells into revolution on March 15, 1961. Lusitania, wearing masks of fox and eagle, attempts to defend its empire, and receives help from other white powers, one of whom wears a cowboy hat with a red, white, and blue ribbon. But the epic narrator describes the growth of the revolution; the bogey attempts to make its sanctimonious sounds as each Negro actor transfixes a member of the white audience in his still, hostile gaze. After a litany of white repressive measures, the actors break out into a frenzy of revolutionary joy—singing, dancing, and dismantling the bogey.

The play has not yet been published (even in German), and I suspect it will make dull reading. It might even make dull theater if played as conventionally realistic agit-prop. But the Negro Ensemble Company moves in and around Weiss' words. Lee Baxandall's English captures the characteristic German of Weiss—from the staccato rhythms of documentary evidence to the obvious rhymes of imperialist satire. And the nine actors of the Negro Ensemble Company emphasize the rhythms, blend them into the narrative pace, and dance rings around them, on the level stage-floor of the old St. Mark's Playhouse.

The cumulative effect of a play about Portuguese Africa written by a German-Swedish Marxist is—celebration of the Negro Ensemble Company. Like many DISSENT readers, I would guess, I am integrationist by temperament and training, and was therefore reluctant to see the formation of an exclusively Negro theater group. Like Professor Esther Jackson, a noted Negro theater scholar, I feared that separate facilities would mean inferior facilities. On the other hand, Ford and Rockefeller are pouring money into so many regional theater groups (not restricted to geographic regions) that it would be criminal to deny funds to a Negro company made up of actors who *want* to perform together.

WITH ITS FIRST PRODUCTION, the Negro Ensemble Company shows itself the most skilled group performing in New York City—on or off Broadway. The diction is precise without being prissy; the voices are varied, and each one has range; the bodies are beautifully disciplined and free. Particularly in that small theater (less than 150 seats), you want to jump and rock into their revolution, but of course you haven't the right. The Negro Ensemble Company turns the patronizing white cliché to tremendous theatrical effect—these darkies have rhythm, and use it for pathos and farce, satire and revolt. The group has not yet existed long enough to have achieved this by training; instead, individual Negro actors must have come—did come, one sees from the program—from all over the country to celebrate with their histrionic gifts and professional competence the creation of the Negro Ensemble Company.

The company has chosen a propitious opener, bending Weiss to their need. *The Song of the Lusitanian Bogey* may not actually dismantle *that* bogey, but it will help break down white supremacy in the American theater. And we can all take joy in the joy of the Negro Ensemble Company. But their joy has been earned through torment. The St. Mark's Playhouse was also the scene of Leroi Jones's plays, and Jones has been harshly sentenced to an American jail. Later this season, the Negro Ensemble Company will perform a play by Wole Soyinka, and Soyinka is now in a Nigerian prison. Weiss' morality is of course simplistic; both blacks *and* whites practice injustice. But black suffering at white hands has been so ubiquitous that we must all rejoice when blacks break through to joy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Richard Robbins

Negro Politics in the South

CLIMBING JACOB'S LADDER: THE ARRIVAL OF NEGROES IN SOUTHERN POLITICS, by Pat Watters and Reese Cleghorn. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. 375 pp. $8.95.

IN THAT BEST AND WORST OF TIMES for the South, the decade from 1955 to 1965, a remarkable drama unfolded. The best came out of "The Movement," the loose coalition of civil-rights groups. The Movement's young people, black and white, went into the Negro communities to persuade the people to organize, to march in peaceful demonstration, as a means of gaining back what the white man had taken away unlawfully in the first place —the right to vote, to dine and travel freely, to be decently schooled and treated with respect at the courthouse. The worst occurred in those towns and cities where the white community's response to The Movement's demand for freedom and justice was met with implacable hostility, intimidation, frequent violence, and, on occasion, murder.

No public issue survives clear-cut, without shading or contradiction, though it may appear so at the time—but later, history duly provides us with a necessary balance and complexity. We know now that the Ugly South of the sadistic sheriffs and sidewalk nigger-haters was one among many Souths. So was The Movement, and it too, for all its high purpose, had more than its share of internal conflicts. But the civil-rights struggle in the South during those years, as it worked itself out primarily in terms of The Movement confronting the Ugly South, brought us as close as we shall ever come to a clean division of justice and injustice. That is one reason why it has resulted in so many books, with many more to come.

Climbing Jacob's Ladder is another in the series, and a very good one—as it has to be to hold our interest which now has shifted from the Southern county to the problems of the new separatism, "black power," and the Northern ghetto. Diary and memoir must give way to first histories, for the nonviolent direct-action movement down South is over; new directions are required, both North and South. The measure of a book now is whether it has caught accurately the brief history of that special time and place, and whether it assesses the permanent impact, if any, upon the Southern system's power and politics.

CLIMBING JACOB'S LADDER meets the first condition admirably. Pat Watters and Reese Cleghorn are journalists who know the South. They have not attempted a comprehensive history of the civil-rights confrontation, but have built most of their book around the aspect they were closest to: the effort of the Southern Regional Council and similar groups to increase Negro voters' registration in the Deep South during the early sixties.

They write of the Council's Voter Education Project (VEP) and those of SNCC, Martin Luther King's SCLC, and COFU (the Mississippi coordinating agency)—all with parallel goals and strategies. Watters and Cleghorn describe the field workers who were sent into the small towns and rural counties to establish contacts, sponsor meetings (often in the small Negro churches), explain the new freedom and how to register and vote. We see the tough, compassionate Negro lawyer who traveled the back roads to document

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cases of voter intimidation and brutal police methods; the young college girl, black or white, just beginning to reach people in the community across a wall of fear and silence; the black Harvard graduate returning South where work had to be done; the young Negro from the town itself, determined and committed.

It is from the scribbled notes, the honest and sometimes uncertain reports of the field workers that the authors have woven their narrative. Their own commentary is clear, moving, beautifully written, and without a trace of sentimentality. They write as committed men who lived close to The Movement, and as men deeply ashamed of the region called the Ugly South. Yet they maintain the distance needed to keep to human beings and human scale, even when describing unbelievable white vindictiveness. They recall the terrible vulnerability of the voter registration groups and that of the people they were trying to reach. As churches and homes were bombed, as sheriffs and deputies applied the traffic laws with wild selectivity, unjust harassment and jailings became a badge of honor for the people in The Movement. State governors and state police spoke for law and order but broke it continuously by being studiously neutral, in order to repress black citizens. The authors write skeptically of Southern oratory. For former Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, South Carolina's first citizen and leading segregationist, they have but one sentence: Byrnes called for "free and unfettered elections" . . . in Poland and Bulgaria!

Local violence the project workers anticipated. What embittered them—and Watters and Cleghorn—was the glacial slowness with which the federal government responded to its citizens' pleas for protection from the mini-totalitarianism in states like Alabama and Mississippi. The FBI, quick as lightning in the pursuit of spies, followed a leisurely procedure in investigating the killing and wounding of civil-rights workers in the South. Much time elapsed before J. Edgar Hoover was finally induced to expand his Southern regional office.

WATTERS AND CLEGHORN are hard on the Kennedys; justifiably. The President and his brother, the Attorney General, were men of good conscience, troubled—especially after Birmingham—by what they saw on television. But they chose, wrongly, to rely exclusively on the federal courts and complex administrative procedures in the Justice Department, and to depend on a working and pragmatic relationship with Southern Democrats. The South naturally seized the advantage handed to it. The result was at best an eccentric civil-rights policy; the President managed to appoint a federal judge whose racism was akin to Hitler's, and the Attorney General often wasted his energy on irrelevant issues, such as the sham "confrontation" with Governor Wallace at the University of Alabama. The key civil rights laws came in 1964–65.

Remarkably then, in the face of unremitting local pressure and in the absence of a real federal *presence* (which only arrived very late), Negro voters' registration increased sharply in the South. In 1962 1.3 million Negroes were registered, 26.8 per cent of Negro voting-age population; the white figures were 10.6 million, 52.5 per cent of white voting-age population. By 1966 there were 2.6 million Negro voters in the South, 52 per cent of their voting-age population; the corresponding white figures were now 14.3 million and 70.2 per cent. Negroes, starting lower, had gone further under far greater stress. The stage had been set, in the words of the book's subtitle, for "the arrival of Negroes in Southern politics."

DISSENT

HAVE YOU MOVED?

•

Send both old and new address to:
DISSENT: 509 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10017

•

Allow three weeks
for change to become effective

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But if the subtitle points to results, the metaphorical title is the key to the value of this book. The statistics were built from "quiet little dramas of grandeur" all over the South as Negro men and women were guided toward registration, were moved in this or that small town to "redish." One night in July 1962, Charles Sherrod, Negro, led the prayers in Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Sasser, Georgia, a little frame building. Later there would be a voter registration meeting. Suddenly, 15 white men, including a deputy, entered and stood at the back of the church. The people sang, "We are climbing Jacob's ladder . . . . Every round goes higher, higher . . ." And then, as the white men turned away and went outside, the singing became exultant: "Rise! Shine! Give God your glory, glory!" But later that night there was further harassment from the sheriff and his deputies. And a few nights afterward Mt. Olive Baptist was burned to the ground.

WHAT OF THE SECOND CONDITION that has to be fulfilled by a book like *Climbing Jacob's Ladder*—that it try to estimate to some degree the impact The Movement and the new Negro voters might have on the future of the Southern social structure? In two final chapters—"The Future of The Movement" and "The Future of Southern Democracy"—Watters and Cleghorn seem to falter. Here, wish appears to be father to their thought. They want to see The Movement continue—who does not?—and they are understandably reluctant to concede how little continuity there now is between the new and the old.

The one case they cite, the survival of the grass-roots Mississippi antipoverty program, is due not so much to the program's roots in the Freedom Schools of half a decade ago, as they argue, as to its good fortune in having friends with power to intervene in Washington. In the same way, while the authors are realistically aware of the great obstacles to converting Negro voter registration into effective Negro voting power, they seem to foresee a conventional two-party system bidding for needed Negro votes and thereby affording Negroes a measure of change. Not much can come from this, I think, save a kind of Negro veto power against the worst white racist candidates turning up in either party.

A way must be found, rather, to make use of the Negro vote now growing so as to get Negroes nominated for higher state offices and—why not?—for Congress. Wielding power, black power, democratically, *with* some whites and *over* other whites, Southern Negroes can begin to get at some of those woeful social and economic conditions that press down on poor whites, and yet harder on poor Negroes. A new kind of black-white middle-class-led coalition seems light-years away in the Deep South; but it is possible. Atlanta, for example, has so far tried only the form and not the substance of it; so her mayor proclaims the city's "progressive" race relations, while its slums are festering not far from his own office. In any case, conventional "bidding" promises even less and it demeans the spirit of The Movement about which Watters and Cleghorn write with such eloquence. The "reformed" Byrd machine in Virginia is no answer to the educational crisis in Virginia; the "reformed" Governor, once an arch-segregationist, has an interest in Negro votes, but none in Negro poverty.

In the end, however, these criticisms of *Jacob's Ladder* do not matter very much. Watters and Cleghorn have not set out to analyze political theory and practice, but to present a history of quiet heroism in a deeply meaningful cause. This they have done surpassingly well.

We on the democratic Left are as much entitled to think about what The Movement meant and was as any royalist has to think back to companies and kings. Knowing The Movement was very far from perfect and now is gone from the South, I still turn again to page 161 of this book. Martin Luther King had come over from Selma, on a special trip to Gee's Bend, Alabama, population 700, all-Negro, terribly poor:

> "I came over here to Gee's Bend to tell you, you are *somebody* . . . you are as good as any white person in Wilcox County."
>
> The old ladies with head scarves knotted in front nodded, and said, "It's so. It's so."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

George Eckstein

The Festering Sore

JOURNEY INTO THE WHIRLWIND, by Eugenia Semyonovna Ginzburg. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. 418 pp. $6.95.

THIS WAY FOR THE GAS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, by Tadeusz Borowski. New York: The Viking Press. 160 pp. $3.95.

WHAT, YET MORE BOOKS on the concentration camps? Who wants to read them—to stir up painful memories, to unbury the dead?

But are we so sure we have learned the lessons of the camps, that key phenomenon of the mid-twentieth century? Does it not reappear in new guises: in the defoliation and "relocation" programs in South Vietnam, in the tribal wars in Africa? Perhaps we can use a reminder from time to time; perhaps we should expose ourselves to these harrowing recordings, not out of masochistic fascination, but so that we finally may come to terms with this essential ingredient of life in our epoch.

There always have been two basically different approaches to the camp experience in the concentration-camp literature. Both are motivated by the urge to "tell the world." One might be called the lament or the accusation, the outcry against an inhumanity that seems beyond our understanding. Somehow this attitude is characterized by eternal amazement. The other approach, both more political and more existential, tries to probe below the surface of the phenomenon, to find the ultimate meaning in the very absurdity, the grim irony, the savage contradictions which life and death in the camps forced upon inmates and jailers alike.

Nothing really new has been written in either of these two veins since the early sixties which saw such important (and largely neglected) examples of the second approach as Jorge Semprun's *The Long Voyage* and Piotr Rawicz's *Blood from the Sky*. But recently, by coincidence, an example of each of the two approaches has been published in this country —belatedly, but hopefully not too late.

EUGENIA GINSBURG wrote her *Journey into the Whirlwind*, the experience of 18 years (1937 to 1955) in Stalin's and post-Stalin jails and arctic camps, soon after her return to "normal" life. She wrote of her experience in the hope that her grandchildren might be permitted to read about them by 1980. She seems overjoyed that the publication date has been advanced—"that the great Leninist truths have again come into their own in our country and Party." In the curious twilight of the current intellectual and publishing scene in Russia, the book has been more or less sanctioned for publication abroad (first in Italy, now in this and other countries); in Russia it is still only circulated in manuscript form. This in itself is a sign of the halfheartedness of the political "thaw"; for the book does not add anything basically new to our knowledge of the conditions and methods of Stalin's investigations, "justice," and penal institutions. Even the Russian public has been exposed to these revelations in politically perhaps more radical form in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.

The most interesting aspect of this book is the political attitude of the author. Mrs. Ginzburg, who was on the staff of a newspaper and the wife of a high functionary in the Tartar republic, is a woman of obvious integrity and steadfastness. And throughout her tribulations she has remained a faithful Communist, thanking the Soviet system for having "given her everything, the very endurance which was now keeping me from going under." She does not go as far as some of her fellow prisoners who upheld their belief in Stalin himself through various intellectual somersaults, or who sharply disassociated themselves from their non-Communist fellow victims (social revolutionaries, religious sectarians; the Trotskyites who were considered part of the "family"). But she never ceased to have faith in the Soviet regime, or to be "amazed" at what was going on in "our" prisons and labor camps.

Of camp conditions she gives the usual picture—neglect, starvation, brutality, and indifference, relieved by occasional bribery and cooperation, help and tolerance. The NKVD ran a thoroughly organized shop, hence "the cleaner the jail, the more to eat, the more courteous the jailers—the closer to death."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Toward the end of her "Journey," her path recrosses that of her chief investigator, who now himself is dying of hunger and exposure in an arctic camp, and she meets a simple Volga-German Baptist who sacrifices his life to save hers from a brutal overseer. But experiences such as these still fail to raise any doubt in her mind about the basic premises of the regime.

TADEUSZ BOROWSKI, who is some 15 years younger than Eugenia Ginzburg, wrote the stories that make up the slim volume of *This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* during the early postwar years. The title alone shows his very different cast of mind. Borowski was a 21-year-old Polish poet and member of the Communist underground when he was caught and imprisoned by the Nazis in 1943. Eventually, as inmate of one of the camps that were part of the Auschwitz complex, he rose to become a minor functionary.

The stories collected in this volume have long been published abroad, some as early as 1946; one of them ("A Day at Harmenz") was previously published in this country in a different translation as part of Maria Kuncewicz's anthology of new Polish writing (*The Modern Polish Mind,* Little, Brown, 1962).

Borowski suffered at the hands of a clear-cut enemy, both class and national. He was not, like Eugenia Ginzburg, the victim of a regime with which the prisoner, however disillusioned, still felt some sort of solidarity. Yet Borowski does not take the easy way of denunciation and disgust, but tries to go to the very bottom of his experience. He succeeds. These short pieces are remarkable in the unsentimental, unflinching frankness with which they face the universal brutality, including that of the inmates themselves and especially of the various camp functionaries among them.

The author describes these functionaries, who virtually ran the camp administration for the SS, from the *Kapo* down to the privileged "Special *Kommandos*," such as those who received the new arrivals from the cattle trains and had access to some of their possessions. To be able to participate in the camp apparatus, to wiggle an "easy" job, a place in the infirmary on a certain day, a pair of shoes, an extra bowl of soup—matters of life and death! To be able to influence decisions, assignments to work or to extermination, to have access to barter or bribe, to be part of an organized group—power over life and death of others! All this—so indispensable for survival—had a price, a heavy price including one's own brutalization.

Borowski does not evade these unpleasant facts; he stresses them, because they were the bitter essence of life in the Nazi concentration camp. There is a class society in camp, and he himself belongs to one of the privileged groups: he is young and healthy, Polish (packages from home!), at times a hospital orderly, at times the foreman of a small labor gang; he has contact with the political group that is struggling for positions of influence in the camp administration. "A Day at Harmenz" illustrates the constant infighting, the briberies and thefts, aggressive group action, and sly deceptions on which survival depends—and also the unspeakable brutality with which the weaker prisoners are eliminated.

The whole camp lives for a while on a "good transport"—one from a wealthy Jewish community whose supply of food and barterable valuables (the gold goes to the SS) is taken from the doomed on arrival by the privileged *Sonderkommando*; from there it filters down through barters and services rendered.

Borowski has an unerring eye and ear for the grotesqueness, the absurdity of life in this condition. In a way, the whole book is a collection of examples. To mention one more: in the "Death of Schillinger" the author tells the story of one of the most brutal Nazi Lagerführer who is eventually shot by a naked Jewish girl whom he tries to pull out of a mass being driven to the gas chambers. As he lies dying in pain, he groans, "O God, what have I done to deserve such suffering!" The man who tells of this "irony of fate" is himself a member of the *Sonderkommando* who (a second irony) drove this girl and her group into the gas chambers after this incident and (triple irony) is liquidated with all his colleagues in the end, after the *Sonderkommando's* last-minute attempt at saving themselves through a revolt.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the midst of this all-perverting brutality, there are flashes of humaneness—unsentimental and offhanded. You can't afford to go soft: such as the passage in "The Man with the Package" where the Prussian-Jewish doctor from Berlin teaches his assistant understanding for the camp "*Schreiber*" who has fallen from grace and who—doomed, and knowing he is doomed—yet clings to a small package with a few belongings on his last walk, naked, to the gas.

In "Auschwitz, our Home," Borowski blames hope itself—"hope that makes people go without a murmur to the gas chambers, keeps them from risking revolt . . . compels man to hold on to one more day of life . . ."

(By contrast, in her *Journey into the Whirlwind*, Eugenia Ginzburg credits hope with helping people survive.)

BOROWSKI WRITES of the prisoner's resentment over his own inhumanity that he cannot turn against the SS but vents upon his fellow victims whose "stupidity" brings about his hardened attitude and cruel actions. Bruno Bettelheim was the first to write of the camp situation in this complex perspective.

Borowski describes the prisoner as he lives constantly at the edge of the abyss, hovers at the thin line that separates life and death—death ever-present as well as utter degradation and exaltation. After several years of this kind of existence, how is one again to live a "normal" life?

What is normal? Is it the absurdity of the man (in "A Visit"), who tumbled out of the cattle car after days spent stifled among living corpses, breathing again and hugging you—"brother, brother!"—who now is a civil engineer with your city? Or is it the guy who lay in a heap of corpses who suddenly kicked when someone tried to pull off his boots—the prosperous owner of a bar now, many years after the holocaust? The absurdity of existence in camp thus haunts "normal" life—you cannot escape it. "It takes too much intellectual effort . . . [to fit] the events, things and people I have seen into this unchanging difficult world chiseled out of stone."

For six years, Borowski tried to fit his experience and to fit himself into what he calls this "World of Stone." By then, it had become the world of his own old ideals, a Communist state. In July 1951 he gave up the struggle; he killed himself with gas.

TODAY, OVER 16 YEARS LATER, we are watching a TV newsreel from Vietnam (CBS, December, 1967): GI's "disposing" of some Viet Cong dead by swinging the thin corpses from a canvas stretcher through the air onto a growing heap which is then picked up and carried away in a net by helicopter to be dropped unceremoniously somewhere, anywhere. . . . Perhaps, for a moment, we stop munching our TV crackers . . .

Walter Goldstein

Intellectuals and Vietnam

TO MOVE A NATION: THE POLITICS OF FOREIGN POLICY IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY, by Roger Hilsman. New York: Doubleday. 602 pp. $6.95.

THIS MEMOIR is at once significant in content and slightly frivolous in effect. It was written by a Columbia professor after three years of hard labor at the Fudge Factory—as the State Department is known to refugees from the Potomac. Prof. Hilsman occupied two of the key offices in the Kennedy Administration: Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. From these positions he collected clandestine notes about the various exercises in bureaucratic infighting, inter-Departmental conflict, and the fudging of strategic choices which he labels the "policy process." His description of the closed system of Executive decision-making will be praised by professional political scientists for its shrewd observations of the functioning of government. He writes clearly and carefully about great events, such as the Cuban missile crisis, the settlement in Laos, and the avoidance of conflict with Indonesia. He is not as sharp an observer of the personalities around Kennedy as Schlesinger or Sorenson, nor did he enjoy their dizzy view

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from the summit. Nevertheless, his unravelling of the Kennedy Administration's techniques of foreign policy formulation is cleverly done and it suffers from only one defect: it is politically banal and historically trivial.

The author has been severely rebuked for his indiscreet revelations about life "on the inside" and for his betraying of official confidences. (This concern about safeguarding "secrets" of state is obviously misplaced: how else would we know about the public service rendered by Top People like Clark Clifford, if there were no such leaks?)

The faults which this reviewer found with the book are of a different order. First, it insists that the policy-making machinery functions in a tightly elitist yet democratic environment; hence it posits a "relative openness" of the policy process that exists neither as myth nor in practice. Second, it devotes 100 or more pages to Vietnam without once questioning the fundamental purposes which the United States supposedly pursues there. Considering the author's analytical skills and his resignation from the LBJ Administration (in part because of his dissent over the ineptitudes of the Vietnam policy which he had helped shape), his long section on Vietnam will surely survive—but only as an example of how Intelligence chiefs can articulately flounder among unexamined questions.

PROF. HILSMAN'S ANALYSIS of Presidential leadership, Congressional oversight, and inter-Department struggles provide shrewd insights into the bureaucracy's organizational life. He is extremely perceptive in defining the complex activity needed to formulate foreign policy. As a "closed system" of power, he notes that the Administration rarely concerns itself with grand strategy or with fundamental choices; "instead . . . the system works to find compromises that blur the alternatives rather than sharpen them."

In good Administrations, Hilsman finds, the President strives to recruit effective lieutenants and organizational "front men." It is their job to represent their Departmental positions, to force the discussion of critical issues, and to maintain a lively form of adversary debate. In poor Administrations, the political chieftains or "front men" simply submit to the President's wishes and thus foreclose a searching review of commitments. Except in times of crisis, each Administration moves slowly and incrementally toward policy decisions. The author demonstrates these points well in explaining the fierce infighting that occurred after the Bay of Pigs fiasco. His own Bureau of Intelligence and Research made a major power play with other Intelligence groups to divest the CIA of some of its advisory functions, of its advantages in secret funds and data storage, and of its control-free operations. In this and other sections he reveals that the best decisions are made by hard-line or big-business "front men" simply because liberal appointees in Democratic Administrations (like Adlai Stevenson or Chester Bowles) are too weak or inexperienced to impose their will upon in-house feuds.[1]

The problem in Hilsman's analysis emerges when he attempts to portray the "relative openness" of the policy system. At various times reference is made to the impact of Congressional action, to the support or criticism of pressure groups, to communications with the mass media, and to the vocal efforts of attentive public opinion. But his own writing on Vietnam reveals that these limited activities do not adequately reflect public expectations—especially if the electorate judges itself to be in a liberal year. All too many of the congressmen concerned with foreign policy issues are either ignorant or intent upon self-publicity (such as Senators Dodd and Keating); and the mass media are frequently biased and utterly unreliable (as he reveals in criticizing Joseph Alsop and Marguerite Higgins). And pressure group activity is often associated with the military-industrial complex or with super-patriots, such as the Committee of One Million to keep China out of

[1] This is the best rationalization for government by corporation counsel and Wall Street executives since C. Wright Mills wrote the *Power Elite*. Hopefully, Bobby Kennedy is now looking through the *Directory of Directors* to find top management types with ruthless organizational experience (like John McCone or Clark Clifford) to staff his "liberal" Administration; no doubt a few academic theorists, like the brothers Rostow, can also be recruited as bards and legend makers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the U.N., while liberal groups (like ADA) are rarely summoned to Capitol Hill.

In no place and in no way does Hilsman indicate how a liberal electorate can prevent a Democratic Administration from sliding toward reactionary or status quo positions. Nor does he appear to worry that the electors' wishes are so weakly heard by policy-makers. Where is the "relative openness" and how can the author judge the policy procedure as "democratic" if an efficient elitism (and not a fluid pluralism) dominates so large a part of the political system?

The striking feature in Hilsman's description is *not* his unconcern for traditional theories of checks-and-balances or for constitutional guarantees against arbitrary government. These attitudes are shared by most of the New Frontiersmen who found in President Kennedy the energetic Executive and crisis manager *par excellence.* What distinguishes Hilsman's position is his total unconcern with political values. He depicts a system in which the Administration's thousands of bureaucrats —and he himself—would or could work as effectively toward reactionary as toward liberal goals in foreign policy. The chief personnel would be the same in a Reagan or a Bobby Kennedy regime, it seems, and the policy system would be equally closed to outsiders (other than those pleading special interests).

Though the overwhelming majority voted in 1964 against a reactionary position there was no way, Hilsman finds, in which their wishes could be respected. The professional skills in policy manipulation and power distribution in Washington happened to move in a contrary direction and the aspirations for a Great Society eventually had to be abandoned. Too bad. No doubt, this cynical process would be repeated if the 1968 Election decided that a battle-to-death in Vietnam should not provide the paramount priority for U.S. foreign policy.[2]

THE BANALITIES of the policy system are most evident when Professor Hilsman describes the manner in which the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations slipped into the absurd involvement in Vietnam. His description is chilling because at no point does he stop to ask:

(1) For whom is the United States fighting this monstrous war?
(2) With whom should negotiations be held to end it?
(3) At what point do the costs in human life and economic sacrifice outrun the advantages that will supposedly be gained by our intransigent position?

The author's failure to contend with "grand strategic alternatives" leaves him with an incomplete and silly story to unfold. For 100 pages he repeats that the U.S. urged Diem to win the allegiance of his people by accepting reforms. It never occurs to him that the satrapy which we established in Saigon was —and still is—totally unable or unwilling to implement such reforms. Nor does he understand the reforms which were required. As a champion of counter-insurgency warfare, he finds no room to specify the character of the reforms which the State Department is supposed to have urged—against the intransigent opposition of the Joint Chiefs, Mr. McNamara, General Taylor, and the wretched Ambassadors and field commanders whom we sent to Saigon (and whom he denounces).

Hilsman wanted a better effort of police administration, school-building, and cement pigsties to be imposed upon an alien and peasant culture. Never once does he mention that many province chiefs and ARVN commanders appointed from Saigon were despised by the peasants; nor does he refer to land reform or the cancellation of back-rents as urgent political issues. No wonder that the savage Nhus were able to utilize his strategic

---

[2] In drawing this cynical portrait of a goal-free Administration, Hilsman does not mention the demoralization which the procedures of "incrementalism" have spread among the machine-minders. If liberals feel helpless before an Administration that ignores their seriously formed criticisms of foreign policy, they should also feel pity for the thousands of impotent but intelligent bureaucrats who remain prisoners of the system. This reviewer has often been touched by the sentiments privately expressed by well-meaning career officials at the end of a campus "teach-in" as they revealed how strenuously they had tried to reverse the drift toward a disastrous policy in Vietnam. Their sentiments reflected some of the banalities of organizational evil which Hannah Arendt depicted in *Eichmann in Jerusalem.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hamlet program for their own corrupt purposes; or that the NLF (which he never mentions!) should appear as a more realistic expression of national identity than the regime we subsidized in the cities.

The lacunae in Hilsman's narrative, even granting his disregard for political values, are astonishing. He records one disaster after another but draws conclusions from none of them. Proof is given on page after page of the false reports and the exaggerated optimism of the U.S. command; indeed, the footnotes reveal—though often in places disjointed from the text—that the number of VC recruits or casualties made nonsense of General Harkins's irresponsible claims. As the war deteriorated and the mendacity of U.S. military reports increased, the "humanitarian" faction (Rostow, Harkins, Taylor, and McNamara) called for a more aggressive drive, the bombing of the North, and an acceptance of Diem's authoritarian rule in the South.

Twenty-two American generals moved into Harkins's HQ but none was interested—to Hilsman's dismay—in counter-insurgency or the strategic hamlets. An incredible deal was struck, after one of McNamara's many fact-finding trips, that he and the Joint Chiefs

> would agree to a policy of "pressure and persuasion" on the Diem regime, which they now [two months before its joyful overthrow] thought necessary, but they would agree only if the White House and State Department would in turn agree to a public announcement that the Pentagon was right about how [well] the "shooting war" had been going.

Hilsman's failure to comment on this cynical piece of "consensus-formation" is characteristic of his analysis. His data reveal that Gen. Harkins's predictions were spurious (as even Ambassador Lodge admitted) and that Ambassadors Nolting and Lodge made no progress in securing reforms from the Saigon regime. "And How Do You Know If You're Winning?" is the title of a chapter—but Hilsman does not tell us how he answered! Gen. Harkins and the Joint Chiefs continued to disregard the political consequences of using napalm on villages or defoliants on their crops; and the military remained intent upon massive operations to "put the fear of God into the Viet Cong." But no one noticed that civilian fatalities and disaffection soared as the war escalated. Nor is mention made of the growing refugee tragedy, of the hatred nourished for Diem's *prefects* as well as for his family, or of the impact made by the Vietnam War on the domestic or other foreign policies of the United States. A narrow-minded specialist, the author is concerned only with value-free problems of policy administration.

YET THIS IS AN IMPORTANT BOOK. It reflects more accurately than the "commentaries" written by Schlesinger or Sorenson the convention-bound, unquestioning attitudes manifest at the second-echelon levels of the State and Defense Departments during the last two Democratic Administrations. Hilsman's book is carefully put together and represents the world-bettering intentions which the Kennedy *intelligentsia* brought to Washington after eight years of Republican rule. No doubt Hilsman, himself, was better read and more articulate than his predecessors in office; but that he was more liberal or flexible is surely implausible.

Even though Kennedy determined to act as a liberal President in his own conservative Administration, the resistance offered by *soi-disant* liberals in key places must have been considerable. If even "front men" like Roger Hilsman could fall for the inane pleadings of the counter-insurgency enthusiasts, or write extensively about Vietnam without serious consideration of the National Liberation Front, it is small wonder that LBJ could extend so many of the Kennedy policies without change. As an Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and then for Far Eastern Affairs, Hilsman probably did as much to warp the State Department's rejection of democratic values as the notorious Mr. Rusk—whom he constantly slights. That the Pentagon could ruthlessly ignore their squeamish policy protests is at last comprehensible. This, after all, is how most democratic governments have tended to disintegrate.

Mr. Hilsman gives no indication that liberal views will ever be considered seriously by the policy mandarins who govern with our consent. To protect government from the governed may be laudable to Hilsman; but his book also suggests that the governors must be protected against their own ineptitudes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

Problems of "Legitimacy"

Editor:

Michael Walzer is in error when he says, "The 'Call to resist illegitimate authority' is . . . misnamed. It is a call to resist the immoral acts of legitimate authorities." I am astonished that he thinks that political scientists and linguists like Raskin, Chomsky, Waskow, myself, etc. could make such a mistake.

We hold that the actions of the Administration *are* illegitimate, usurping, and threaten the essence of the Republic. They are not merely immoral or unjust. There has been sporadic talk of impeachment—which we do not press simply because the effort would be ineffectual, not because it is unjustified.

The Administration has persistently lied, not for purposes of national security, but simply to deceive the American public and lead it down a garden path. There are dozens of examples, I will mention a few. We were not building bases in Thailand. The draft calls would be reduced (Nov. 1967), whereas they have been increased. There were no peace-feelers at the time of the bombing pause. The ship in the Gulf of Tonkin had not been in North Vietnamese territorial waters (as we know, there is doubt that it was seriously attacked). On a bigger scale were the continual assurances in 1963, '64, '65 that the end was in sight. And the continual concealment of the blackmail exerted by Ky and Thieu.

The case is that the government spends $425 million a year on news gathering and dissemination, a budget more than double that of the combined major news services, the three major TV networks, and the ten biggest newspapers. Nevertheless, these news outlets predominantly also disseminate the government story. Under these circumstances, when the government lies, how is democracy possible?

In 1964, Johnson ran on the program of not escalating, though the plans for escalation were already drawn. There is no doubt the Administration has continually confronted the public with *faits accomplis.*

The Congress has gone along with this, perforce. Although there are now very many doves in both Houses, nevertheless on actual votes on appropriations or the draft, there operates a steam-roller, with the same handful of negative votes.

There has been a rout of resignations from the Cabinet, among the undersecretaries, and so forth. But these dissident officials do not come clean, so that a widespread public opposition can have leaders. They act like an undemocratic inner clique. And underlying, of course, is the overwhelming influence of the military-industrial corporations who now for 30 years have been subsidized by scores of billions of dollars with check neither of Congress nor of the market.

All this adds up, in our opinion, to a situation very like the Roman Empire under Tiberius (past the stage of Augustus), in which the Senate was an image and the democracy was a brainwashed collection of clients. Naturally, as Americans we resist it—it is illegitimate.

One final point. In general, if possible, tactics ought to be such as to lead to the condition of society that is desirable; or at least not to prevent it. In my own opinion—I do not speak for my colleagues—our best Constitutional tradition has a weak concept of Sovereignty; it encourages civil disobedience, populist protest, and even fringes of violence. It is so that law has always been made amongst us during critical periods, whether defying injunctions against picketing, or laws of trespass, or fugitive slave laws. Since this is the kind of society I want to get to, I am pleased to join in the tactics of the Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority.

PAUL GOODMAN

MICHAEL WALZER *replies*:

There is too much self-serving rhetoric in the air these days. Political scientists and linguists working for the government coolly abuse the language for the sake of this or that political purpose. Thousands of Americans, with a Goodmanesque respect for authority, cannot believe that such distinguished men might possibly be mistaken. And on the Left, in a lesser way, the same phenomena, though without the same cool audacity. For when *we* lose our respect for rational discourse and critical analysis—which is our special mark—we tend to sound hysterical, as if the loss were also a loss of self-confidence, as I think it is. So we are told by one political scientist that South Vietnam has a democratic government and by another that the U.S. (I assume that Paul Goodman takes his Roman analogy seriously) is a corrupt dictatorship. I want to say a much louder no to the first of these distortions than to the second, for the first is echoed by powerful men and widely believed, and the second isn't. But for the sake of clarity on the Left I want to say no the second time also.

The U.S. government meets the minimal standards of democratic legitimacy, that is, it is a government that governs with the consent of the people or of a majority of the people, in a society where the possibility of opposition exists. A democratic government loses its legitimacy when it represses opposition; or when it is repudiated by a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

majority of citizens and fails to leave office; or when its policies are repudiated by a majority (or by the representatives of a majority) and then defiantly pursued; or, finally, when masses of men simply stop obeying its laws and no one or virtually no one rallies to its support. None of these conditions exist in the U.S. today. That's not to say that the President doesn't have too much power: he does; or that politicians are not pusillanimous: most are; or that the great corporations don't have enormous influence: they do; or that the mass media are equally available to the government and the opposition: they're not.

Things are radically wrong with American democracy, at least so Paul Goodman and I believe, but calling the government illegitimate neither specifies what is wrong nor helps in righting the wrong. It is just one more piece of rhetorical inflation. At best, it undercuts still further our readiness to believe the things we hear (and our commitment to believe the things we say); at worst, it inspires a variety of political adventures all based on the absurd proposition that governments that don't deserve popular support don't have it.

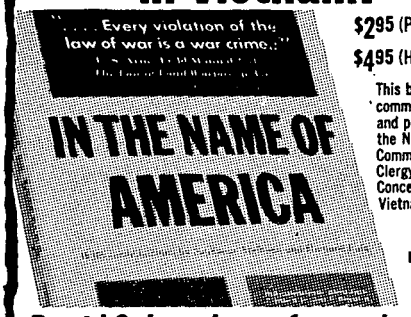
Faculty Views on Vietnam

A RANDOM SURVEY of 300 faculty members at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, revealed that the faculty there is far from solidly dovish in its position on Vietnam. The survey, conducted by sociologists Howard Schuman and Edward Laumann, was made after one-fifth of the faculty had signed a letter calling for an unconditional halt in the bombing of North Vietnam. Results were reported in *Trans-action* (November 1967). Schuman and Laumann concluded that:

> . . . by the most generous estimate, 38 per cent of the faculty oppose the bombing and 50 per cent . . . support the bombing.
>
> [They also noted], Signers and supporters of a letter calling on the President to stop the bombing made up 35 per cent of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, as opposed to only 29 per cent of the university as a whole. Supporters of the bombing made up only 25 per cent of the liberal-arts faculty, compared with 28 per cent of the whole faculty.

Seventeen per cent of those sampled in the medical school and 22 per cent in the engineering college supported the stop-the-bombing letter. Three out of four social scientists wanted the bombing stopped; humanists tended to oppose the bombing, but by a closer ratio, and the natural scientists were the only group in which those favoring the bombing outnumbered those who wanted it stopped.

This Book presents a hard, inside look into the "Facts of Life"— *and Death,* of our actions in Vietnam!



$2.95 (Paperback)
$4.95 (Hard Cover)

This book was commissioned and published by the National Committee of Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam

432 pages

David Schoenbrun, formerly Chief Correspondent for CBS News says:

"In the Name of America" discloses an American crisis and issues that must be faced by every responsible citizen.

To whom are the President of the United States and his subordinates responsible for charges of violating the supreme law of the land and thereby their oath of office? What can be done to restore the rule of law in America?

Any compromise on these issues risks the destruction of the principles upon which our society has been built.

The news dispatches of our activities in Vietnam, contained in this book do not make pleasant reading. Their cumulative effect is overpowering for they establish something few of us have known — that American conduct in Vietnam has been characterized by consistent violations of almost every international agreement relating to minimal standards of human behavior in time of war.

When we measure American actions in Vietnam against the minimal standards of constraint established by the Hague Convention of 1907, the Geneva Conventions of 1929 and 1949, and the Nuremburg Trials, our nation must be judged guilty of having broken almost every agreement to maintain standards of human decency.

"In the Name of America" is a Must!

Available at book stores, Regional Offices of the American Friends Service Comm., or use this order form.

Check or Money Order Must Accompany Each Order

Clergy & Laymen Concerned About Vietnam
475 Riverside Drive (Room 547) • New York, N.Y. 10027

Enclosed is $ .....for..... Paperback copies at $2.95 ea.

Enclosed is $.....for.....Hard Cover copies at $4.95 ea.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... STATE ..... ZIP .....

D

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of racial segregation. In this regard, the black-power advocates are not unlike the white segregationists, many of whom give lip service to the goals of justice but insist that it be obtained through racial segregation. The black-power advocates and the white segregationists share the belief in the magic of race and color and the belief that it is possible for American democracy to function effectively under a system of racial segregation. Some black-power advocates suggest that they differ from the segregationists in that they see the racial separatism which they are demanding as essentially positive because it comes from Negroes themselves. They however do not answer the question of why or how segregation demanded by Negroes will have any more beneficial effect than the historic forms of segregation imposed upon Negroes by whites. They do not deal effectively with the question of why the separate-but-equal doctrine and myth can be more positive and realistic when advocated by Negroes than when advocated by white segregationists.

Other black-power advocates have asserted that their form of racial separatism is positive because it is the only realistic approach to racial justice in a racist America. This more moderate black-power point of view is not the main thrust of the diverse and ambiguous black-power movement, however. Black power is generally not seen and accepted by its proponents as an interim phase toward racial justice and certainly not generally proposed as a step toward racial integration. Black power is generally an emotional reaction to racial injustice and is a pathetic manifestation of the extent to which the American racist disease has infected its victims. . . .

THIS PROBLEM CANNOT BE REMEDIED by the blind-alley approach of the black nationalists who are insisting upon all-black schools in all-black communities. There is absolutely no evidence which supports their contention that they will be any more successful in making the myth of separate but equal a positive reality than were the white segregationists. If the quality of education in the predominantly Negro schools is to be increased to a tolerable level of efficiency, this will require the combined thinking, energy and commitment of Jews, Catholics, Protestants, of whites and Negroes, to develop and implement immediately an effective program for the attainment of this limited goal.

It is important that I not be misunderstood. The above statement does not mean that I have personally given up on the goal of reorganizing our public-school system from its present system of racial segregation to a non-segregated system. What I mean is that the present level of criminal inefficiency of the public schools is absolutely intolerable and must be remedied and that it cannot be remedied by intensifying racism in the public schools. It is imperative that these schools be raised to a level of efficiency as an integral part of an effective and serious program of public-school desegregation. This is a job for all concerned and committed Americans. It is not a job for Negroes alone. It is not a job which will be facilitated either by black-nationalist polarization and intensification of the realistic racial problem; nor is it a job which can be successfully accomplished by Jewish and white withdrawal—even when this withdrawal comes under the transparent mask of acquiescence to the black-power demands for Negro control of their own schools. To go in this direction would make a mockery of the *Brown* decision and would perpetrate a hoax on all American children, black and white. . . .

If I were white, I would consider it absurd that anyone could tell me that by virtue of my color I am disqualified in asserting and working for justice and human dignity. I would consider myself demeaned if I were intimidated into removing myself from this struggle by black or white racists. No person can tell another human being how much he values human justice and how much or how he should struggle for its attainment. Those black nationalists who seek to pre-empt this struggle for themselves betray the fact that they are among the most pathetic victims of the virulence of American racism.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TEACHERS

College and High School

History — Sociology — Political Science — Economics — International Relations — Government

We invite you to consider using DISSENT in your classroom. Properly handled, it may make a stimulating and valuable source of discussion, assignment, reading, or research. We offer you the opportunity to order DISSENT at our special classroom rate for bulk orders of five (5) or more mailed to a single address. (A free copy for the instructor will automatically be enclosed.)

The special bulk order rate is *50¢ per copy,* or half the regular cost. Advance payment is not required; you order copies in advance and your bill will be sent after shipment. DISSENT comes out the first week of January, March, May, July, September, and November. You must place in advance your order for each issue; if desired we can advise you of contents before publication.

Place your order today, or write DISSENT for additional information.

TEACHERS DEPARTMENT
DISSENT
509 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y., 10017

WANTED!!

Subscription and Bundle Order Agents on the Campuses

DISSENT offers an excellent opportunity to students interested in earning extra money. We are looking for active campus agents.

We offer excellent terms—substantial commission, return of unsold copies, promotional literature, etc.

Interested? Write us for details:

STUDENT AGENT DEPARTMENT
DISSENT
509 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y., 10017

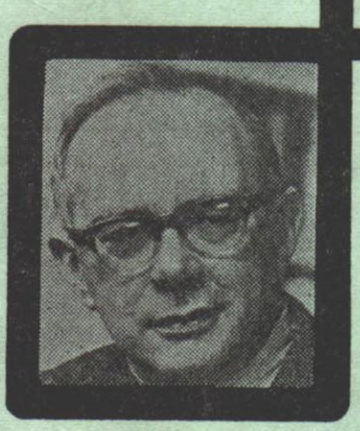
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vietnam, Berkeley, the East Village, Harlem, and the other challenges to the liberal conscience today

The Radical Imagination

Edited by

Irving Howe



In twelve years of publication, *Dissent* magazine has become the living conscience of American liberalism. This *Dissent* anthology, introduced by Michael Harrington and featuring such writers as Claude Brown, Harvey Swados, Paul Goodman, Ignazio Silone, Lewis Coser, Lionel Abel, and Mr. Howe himself, focuses that conscience on the great social problems of the sixties.

"Intelligent, literate, and nonauthoritarian . . . European radicals like Leszek Kolakowski, Stuart Hampshire, and Abram Tertz are represented, along with many of *Dissent's* regular contributors . . . No one radical vision animates all of these writers, but they share a perspective that is too frequently inaccessible . . . Recommended."

—*Library Journal*

$7.95 at bookstores

NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY

Publishers of Signet, Signet Classic, and Mentor Books

A SUBSIDIARY OF THE TIMES MIRROR COMPANY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED